1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

KING COUNTY

Signature Report

Motion 16833

Proposed No. 2025-0152.1 **Sponsors** Barón

A MOTION accepting the office of law enforcement oversight's annual report for the year 2024.

WHEREAS, K.C.C. 2.75.040 requires the office of law enforcement oversight ("OLEO") to develop and "transmit an annual report and a motion accepting the report" to the council by June 1 of each year, and

WHEREAS, OLEO submits its 2024 annual report;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

8 The Office of Law Enforcement Oversight 2024 Annual Report, which is

9 Attachment A to this motion, is hereby accepted.

Motion 16833 was introduced on 5/27/2025 and passed by the Metropolitan King County Council on 6/17/2025, by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Balducci, Barón, Dembowski, Dunn, Mosqueda, Perry, Quinn, von Reichbauer and Zahilay

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Signed by:
Girmay Zahilay
1AEA3C5077F8485...

Girmay Zahilay, Chair

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:
Melani Hay
8DE1BB375AD3422...

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

Attachments: A. OLEO 2024 Annual Report

King County

OLEO

OFFICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OVERSIGHT

2024 Annual Report

Contact OLEO

PHONE: 206-263-8870

EMAIL: OLEO@kingcounty.gov

WEB: kingcounty.gov/OLEO

To request a print copy of this Annual Report, call or email OLEO.

FOR BEST VIEWING EXPERIENCE

This report is intented to be read on a screen and includes navigational links at the top of each page. For the best experience, we recommend using a PDF viewer rather than a web browser to navigate the report.

Alternate formats available.
Call 206-263-8870 or TTY: 711.

Letter from the Director

2024 was a marquee year for the Office of Law Enforcement Oversight (OLEO), one on which we intend to build for years to come. OLEO continues to expand our operations, exercise more of our statutory powers, and increase our connections within the community.

Some of the important highlights from 2024 include:

- Planning and piloting our program for independent investigations.
- Issuing OLEO **findings recommendations** on more investigations than ever before.
- Launching our first **policy review** under our Community Guidance Framework.
- Issuing a report on **trauma-informed notifications** about critical incidents.
- Executing **memoranda of understanding** with multiple community-based organizations.

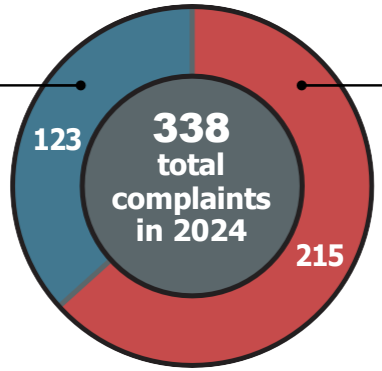
In addition, we have reviewed more investigations of misconduct complaints against the King County Sheriff's Office (Sheriff's Office) than ever before. Both the number of certification reviews (162 vs. 71) and the total number of full reviews (255 vs. 128) **have more than doubled over the previous year**. And, we have continued to build our capacity, through both staffing and professional development, to set ourselves up for future success.

It is my honor to lead such a dedicated team of public servants at OLEO, and together it is the honor of all of us to serve the residents of King County.

Tamer Y. Abouzeid, Director

2024 By the Numbers

36%
of misconduct complaints received were from Sherif's Oice employees

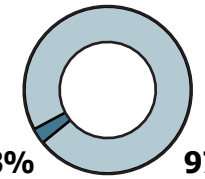


64%
of misconduct complaints received were from the community

	Complaints from from Sherif's Oice	Total complaints	Complaints the community
Compared to 2023	+44%	+18%	+6%
Compared to 2021 - 2023 average	+7%	-3%	-8%

Classifications

OLEO reviewed 100% of classifications for every complaint



3% Summary review

97% Formal input

Full investigations reviewed: 255

Up from **128** in 2023

Up from **71** in 2023

Specifically, expedited investigations where preliminary evidence was conclusive

157 **certified by OLEO** (97%)

5 **OLEO declined to certify** (3%)

Certification percentage consistent with 2023

Findings

OLEO recommended findings for **8 investigations**

In **5 of the cases**, Sherif's Oice final findings difered from initial findings recommendations

Policy

5 new policy review partnerships with community organizations

34 **policy recommendations** issued

Community contacts with OLEO

In 2024, OLEO was contacted by community members nearly

280 times

+40% since 2022

About OLEO

Our Mission

OLEO provides independent oversight of the Sheriff's Office. We conduct objective reviews and independent investigations, and make evidence-based policy recommendations that are guided by the community and rooted in equity.

Our Vision

A King County where laws are just and fairly applied, and where the criminal legal system does no harm.

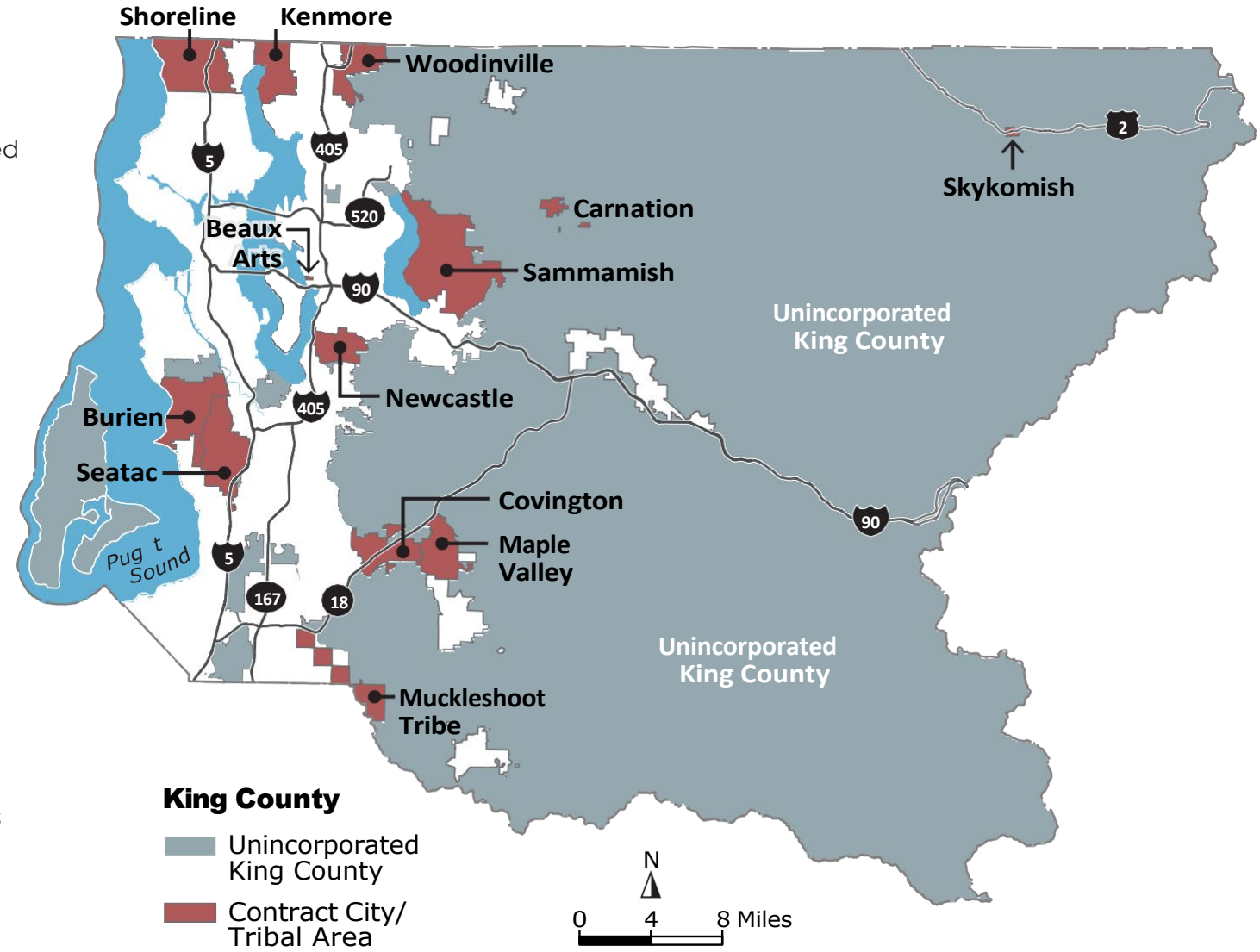
Our Team

Tamer Abouzeid, *Director*
Liz Dop, *Operations Manager*
Simrit Hans, *Policy Analyst*
Lea Hunter, *Senior Policy Analyst*
Katy Kirschner, *Deputy Director*
Megan Kraft, *Investigations Analyst*
Najma Osman, *Community Engagement Specialist*
Ryan McPhail, *Investigations Monitor*
Kate Miller, *Investigations Analyst*
Jamie Ridgway, *Investigations Analyst*
Jamie Tugenberg, *Community Engagement Specialist*
Rick Powell, *Investigations Analyst*
Molly Webster, *Policy Analyst*
Sophie Ziliak, *Project Administrator*

About OLEO *continued*

Our Communities

OLEO serves King County residents who are served by the Sheriff's Office. Some services are provided based on location, such as unincorporated King County, 12 cities that contract with the Sheriff's Office for the provision of police services, the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, and the King County International Airport – Boeing Field. In addition, the Sheriff's Office provides some services that may cross multiple jurisdictional lines, such as police services for Metro and Sound Transit, and the execution of court orders and evictions throughout King County.



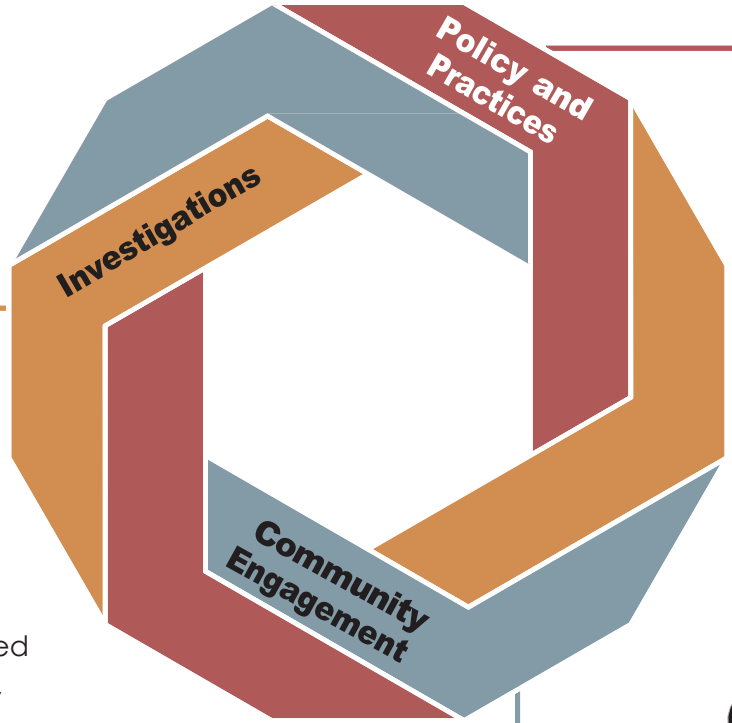
About OLEO *continued*

Our Work

OLEO's work encompasses Investigations, Policy and Practices, and Community Engagement. When reviewing or conducting investigations, OLEO's commitment is to be objective and focus on the evidence. When it comes to policy and practices, it is our duty to recommend better policies that promote equity and reduce policing's attendant harms to our communities. We come to know about these harms, and about the priorities we should pursue, by engaging with community stakeholders, analyzing trends in investigations, and reviewing outside research.

Investigations

Investigations work encompasses two parallel workflows. Most commonly, OLEO monitors, reviews, and issues recommendations on misconduct complaint investigations conducted by the Sheriff's Office's Internal Investigations Unit. In 2024, OLEO also started our second workflow, conducting our own independent investigations in some cases. So far, all such investigations have been conducted in parallel to, and in coordination with, the Sheriff's Office. The workflow also allows OLEO to independently investigate complaints even if the Sheriff's Office does not.



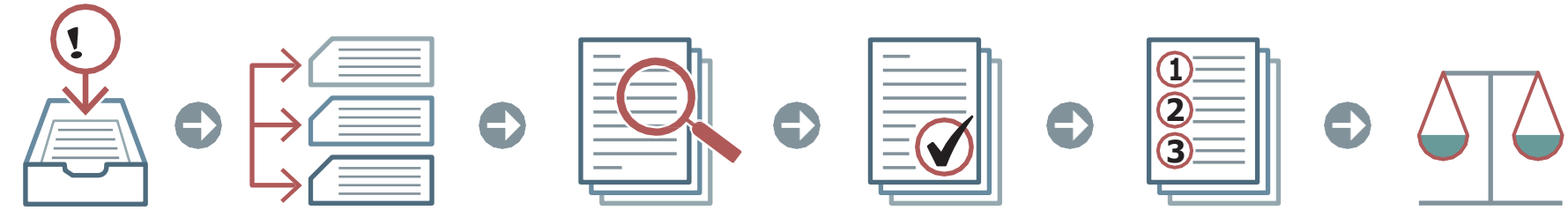
Policy and Practices

Policy and practices work entails reviewing potential policy changes initiated by the Sheriff's Office, or initiating recommendations ourselves. Additionally, through data collection and analysis, we seek to better understand Sheriff's Office practices and operations and analyze them for consistency with laws, policy, standard operating procedures, and community standards.

Community Engagement

Community engagement work focuses on ensuring that communities served by OLEO and the Sheriff's Office have a loud voice that is incorporated into our work product, especially when formulating policy recommendations. We also seek to educate King County residents about OLEO and the role we play.

Oversight of Sheriff's Office Investigations of Misconduct Complaints



The Sheriff's Office's Internal Investigations Unit (IIU) has 180 days to complete an investigation into a misconduct complaint. This could result in a complaint reported in one year being closed in the following year. The data analysis in this report focuses on actions taken in 2024 during the complaint process. For complaint classifications and allegations, we analyzed investigations opened in 2024. For the quality of investigations or the outcome of complaint investigations, such as disposition or discipline, we analyzed investigations closed in 2024.[1]

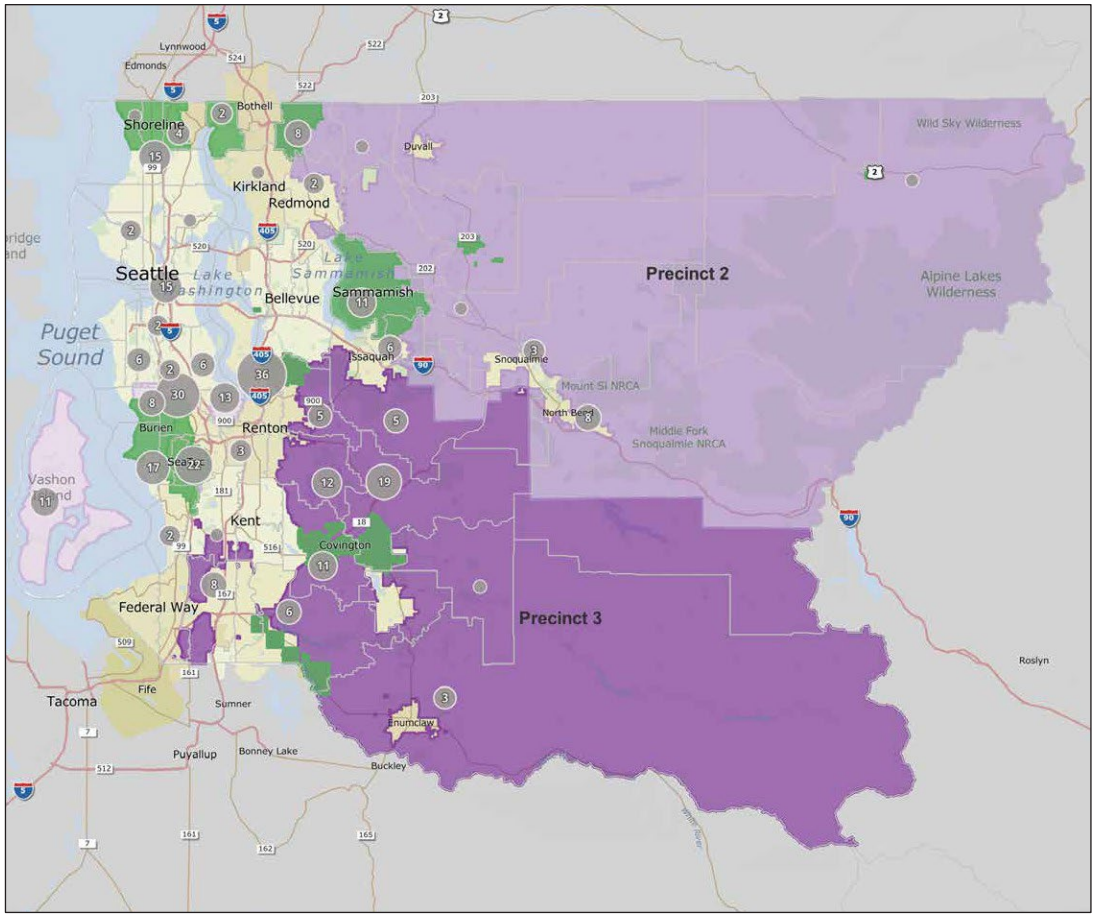
OLEO Annual Reports are required by King County Code 2.75.040(H). Annual Reports include qualitative and quantitative information demonstrating how OLEO fulfills its purpose, duties, and responsibilities. Data is gathered from the Sheriff's Office's database, IAPro. It is reflective of accurate and complete data at the time of the data collection cutoff. For more information, see **Appendix A: Notes About Data**.)

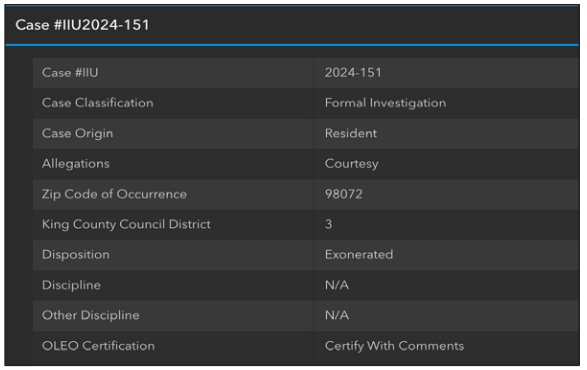
[1] OLEO's methodology for analyzing the data may differ from the Sheriff's Office's methodology in analyzing yearly numbers; accordingly, numbers may not match.

Mapping 2024 Complaints

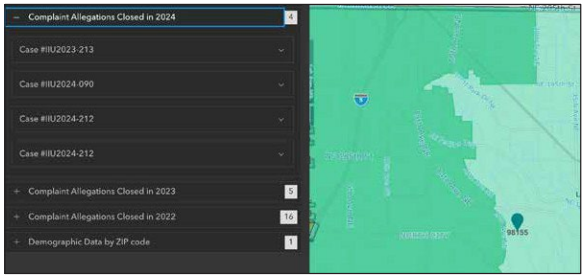
To increase the accessibility to our data, OLEO and King County's **Geographic Information System** collaborated to provide a geospatial representation of misconduct complaint allegations. Data starts with complaints closed in 2022 and subsequent years are added accordingly. The full interactive experience is available **here**.

With some exceptions explained on the map, this snapshot presents the clustering of Sheriff's Office misconduct complaint allegations closed in 2024, mapped by ZIP code.





Details for each allegation are also available on the map.



Users can also filter by type of allegation, internal and external (resident) complaints, disposition, OLEO certification status, and/or King County Council District.

Complaints Received by OLEO

In addition to filing complaints with the Sheriff's Office directly, OLEO may **receive complaints** from any complaining party, including Sheriff's Office employees or the community. Complaints received by OLEO are forwarded to the Sheriff's Office for further review, although OLEO may conduct additional intake first to assist complainants in this process. Please note: Not all complaints result in formal investigations, especially if it is determined to be a complaint over which the Sheriff's Office and OLEO lack jurisdiction. In those instances, OLEO connects complainants to the proper agency.

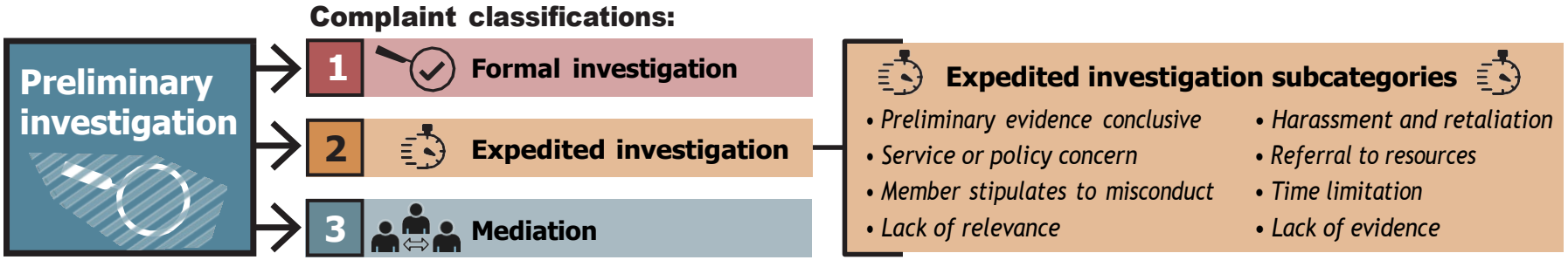
In 2024, OLEO was contacted nearly 280 times, conducting complaint intake or follow- up as appropriate. The number of community contacts with OLEO has increased by 12% ye r-over-year and by 40% since 2022.[2]

[2] In 2023, OLEO was contacted nearly 250 times; in 2022, nearly 200.

Complaint Intake Classifications

When IIU receives a complaint, one of its early steps is to classify the complaint, which determines whether and how the Sheriff's Office will proceed on an allegation of misconduct. While the Sheriff's Office distinguishes between "misconduct" and violations of "performance standards," for purposes of this Annual Report, "allegation of misconduct" includes any allegation that a subject employee has violated the General Orders Manual (GOM).

After a preliminary investigation is complete, a complaint is classified in one of three ways: formal investigation, expedited investigation, or mediation. Expedited investigations include eight subcategories.



For more detail on definitions of classifications, including subcategories, see **Appendix B: Complaint Classifications**.

OLEO reviews and provides input on the Sheriff's Office's classifications, which includes verifying that allegations are correctly identified and/or proposing additional steps that need to be completed before determining the classification. In 2024, OLEO reviewed 100% of investigations for classifications, conducting a full review of 97% of investigations and a summary review of 3% of investigations. When fully reviewing complaints for classification, OLEO recommended a formal investigation in just over 50% of cases.

In 2024, OLEO and the Sheriff's Office expanded on the successes born out of the revised classification system. While the system was fully implemented by mid-2023, 2024 marks the first year that all new cases were classified under the revised system. Not only has this classification system enabled OLEO and IIU to use their resources more efficiently, but it has also contributed to better outcomes with regard to OLEO's role in certifying IIU investigations. Because OLEO can engage with IIU earlier in the investigation process, both agencies are able to identify potential obstacles to certification early and overcome them before they become irreversible outcomes.

The number of total misconduct complaints rose significantly in 2024 as shown in Figure 2, which is a change from recent years' trends. In 2024, total complaints increased to 338, mostly accounted for by an increase of internal complaints from Sheriff's Office employees. While complaints from the community also rose modestly from 2023, they only represented 64% of the total complaints opened in 2024, compared to 70%+ seen in the previous two years. Internal complaints represented 36% of the 2024 total, and were at their highest number since 2021.

Expedited—preliminary evidence conclusive investigations made up nearly 40% of the total classifications opened in 2024.

Internal expedited investigations where preliminary evidence was conclusive, often representing allegations corrected with performance-related training from a supervisor, were closed more quickly compared to similar investigations in 2023. In 2024, such investigations were completed in one month, on average.

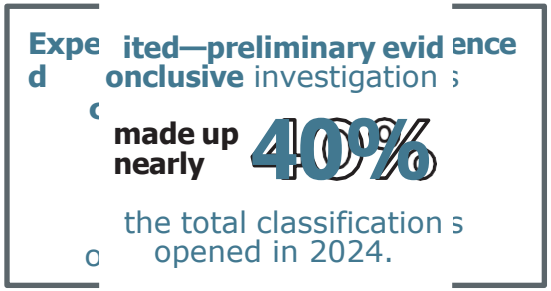
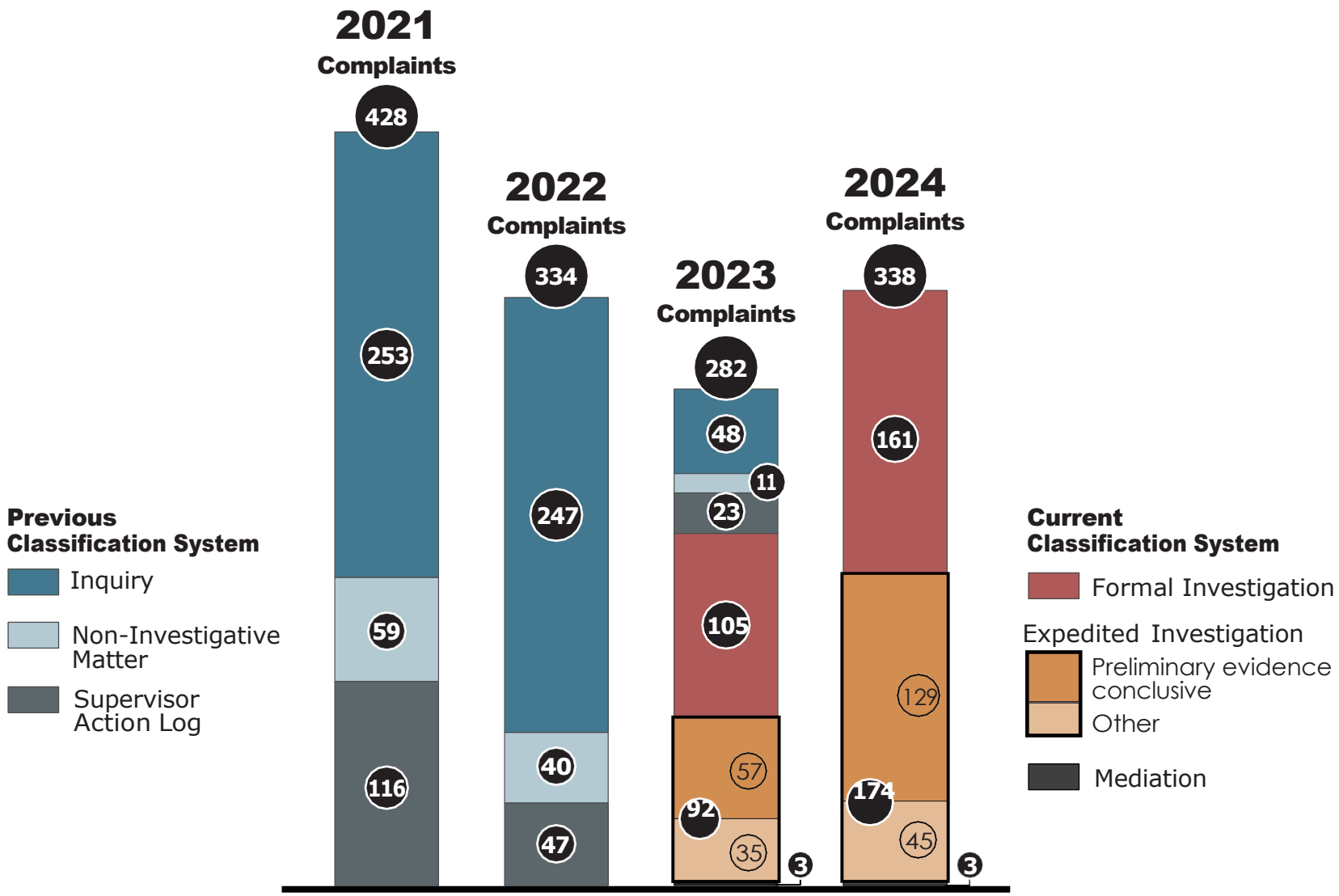


Figure 1: *Breakdown of Classifications, 2021-2024*



Types of Allegations

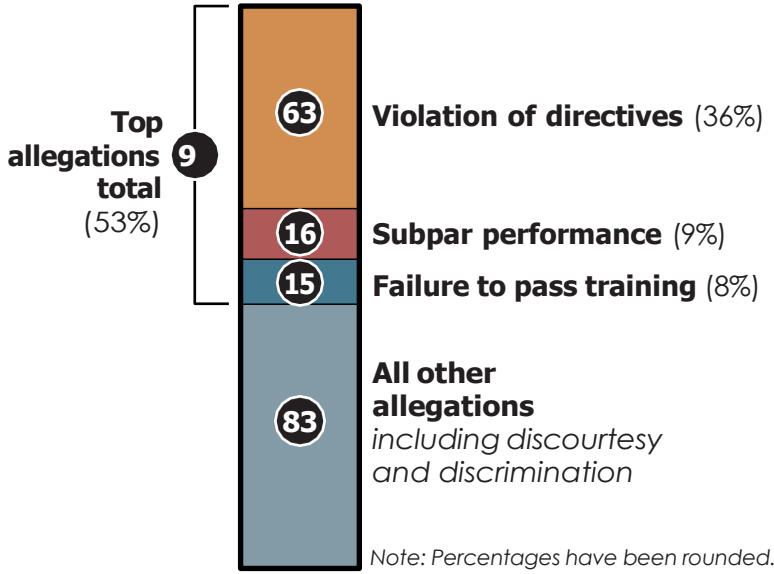
A complaint may include more than one allegation; therefore, the number of allegations exceeds the number of complaints. For example, in 2024, complaint investigations had an average of 1.8 allegations each, an increase from 2023.

The 338 complaints made in 2024 included 606 allegations of misconduct, with 177 allegations from Sheriff's Office employees and 429 from the community.

Just over half of the allegations of misconduct from Sheriff's Office employees are of three specific types related to adherence to policy, standards, and training (Figure 2). Discourtesy and discrimination are also common internal allegations.

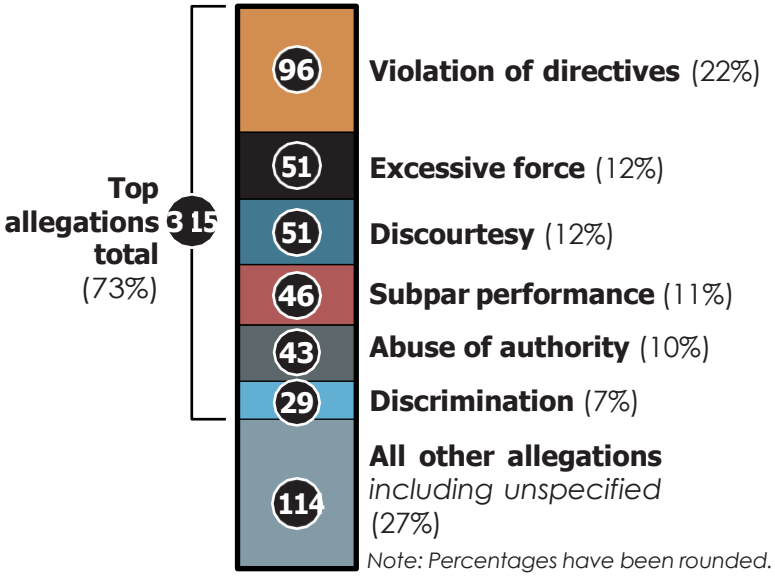
Seventy-three percent of the misconduct allegations from community members were of six specific types, the breakdown of which is described below in Figure 3. Subsequent analyses will focus only on allegations resulting from community complaints (referred to as "external") and include all classifications.

Figure 2: *Top Internal Allegations in 2024*



Note: Percentages have been rounded.

Figure 3: *Top External Allegations in 2024*



Note: Percentages have been rounded.

General Orders Manual Revision and New Allegations

In August of 2024, the Sheriff's Office updated the section of the General Orders Manual related to personnel misconduct. This update consisted largely of language cleanup and consolidation of allegations considered redundant. For example, the update eliminated the specific prohibition against taking a bribe as that conduct was already prohibited by the prohibition against engaging in criminal conduct. Notably, two updates were made regarding allegations of discriminatory conduct. First, the list of protected classes against which discrimination is prohibited was updated to mirror the language contained in general King County Human Resources policies. Second, the additional offense of inappropriate conduct was created to cover conduct that may not meet the definition of discrimination according to Sheriff's Office policies but nevertheless communicates a "hostile, derogatory, unwelcome, or negative message" about someone based on their membership in a protected class .

Patterns in Allegations Against Sworn Employees

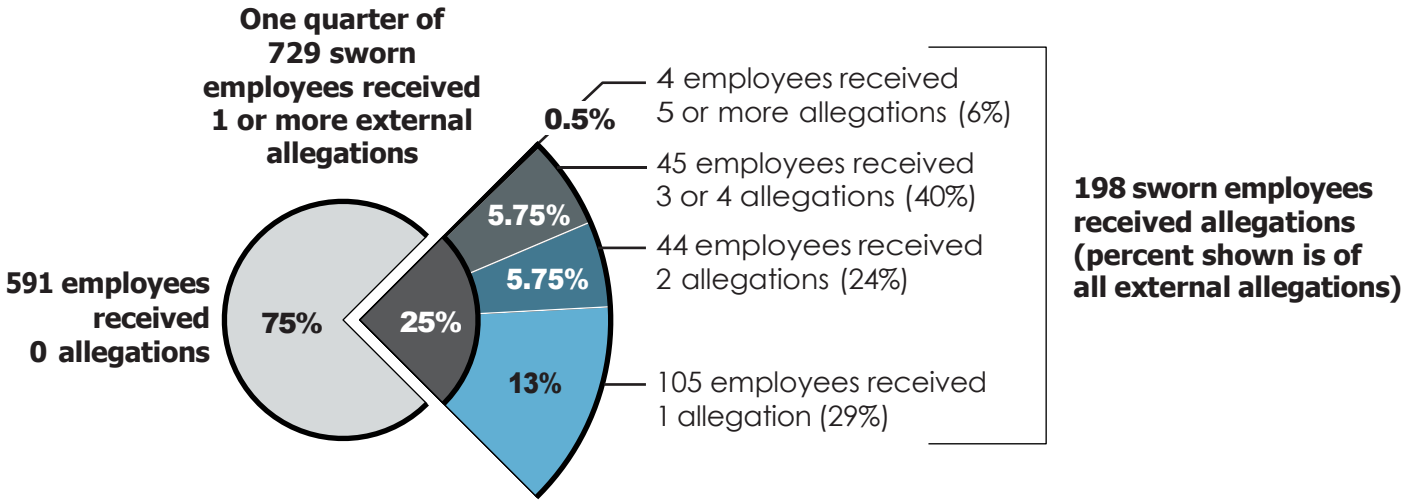
Consistent with recent years, in 2024, a quarter of sworn[3] Sheriff's Office employees (198 of 729) were the subjects of at least one allegation of misconduct from a community member.

A small number of deputies accounted for a significant number of misconduct allegations, more so than in 2023. Nearly half (46%) of external allegations were against deputies who have had 3 or more allegations leveled against them, just 6% of the sworn force.

17 deputies

received three or more yearly external allegations in multiple years between 2022 and 2024.

Figure 4: *External Allegations Against Sworn Employees in 2024*

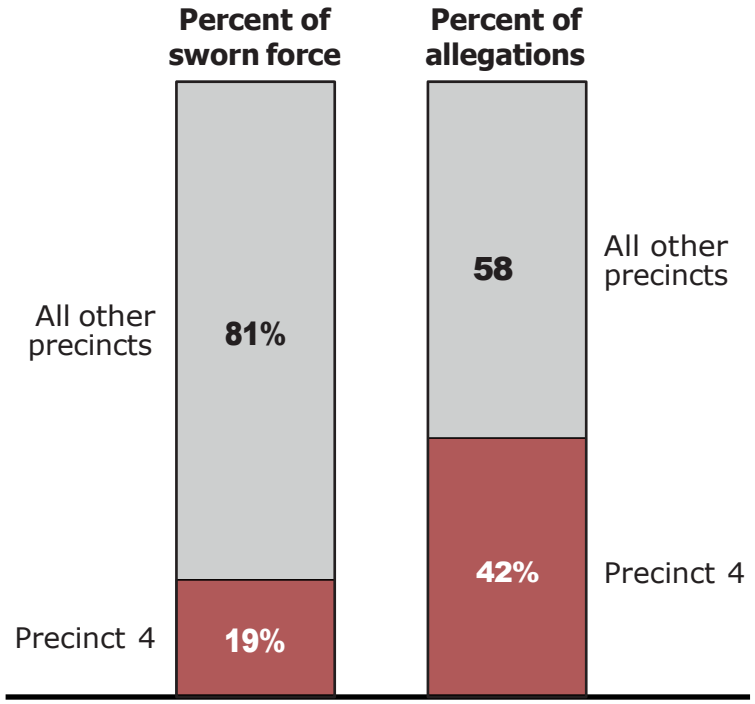


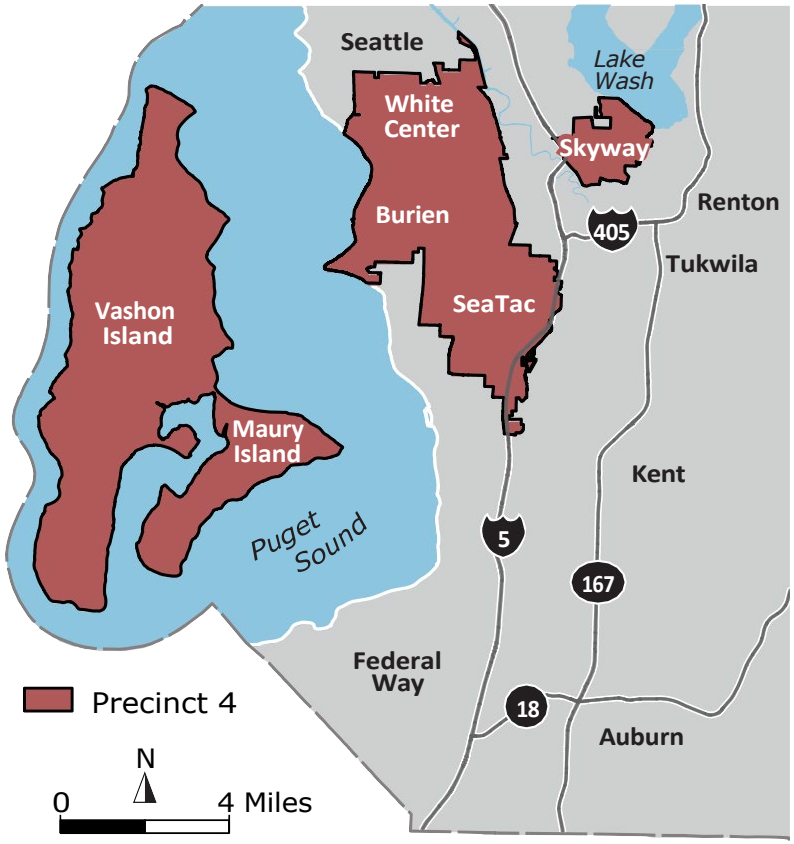
Note: We excluded investigations in which IIU either could not identify the subject employee or the subject employee was unknown. Counts of Sheriff's Office sworn employees were provided by Sheriff's Office Human Resources.

[3] Sworn employees refers to all commissioned personnel including the Sheriff, Undersheriff, and various rankings of deputies.

In addition, a large percentage of these allegations are about deputies assigned to specific geographic areas. The geographic area of Precinct 4 covers the areas of Skyway/West Hill, North Highline (including White Center), Vashon Island, Burien, and SeaTac. When community members complained of misconduct, 42% of the allegations were about deputies assigned to Precinct 4 at the time. Typically, 20% of the Sheriff's Office sworn force is assigned to this area.

Figure 5: *Deputy Assignment Breakdown for External Allegations Against Deputies*





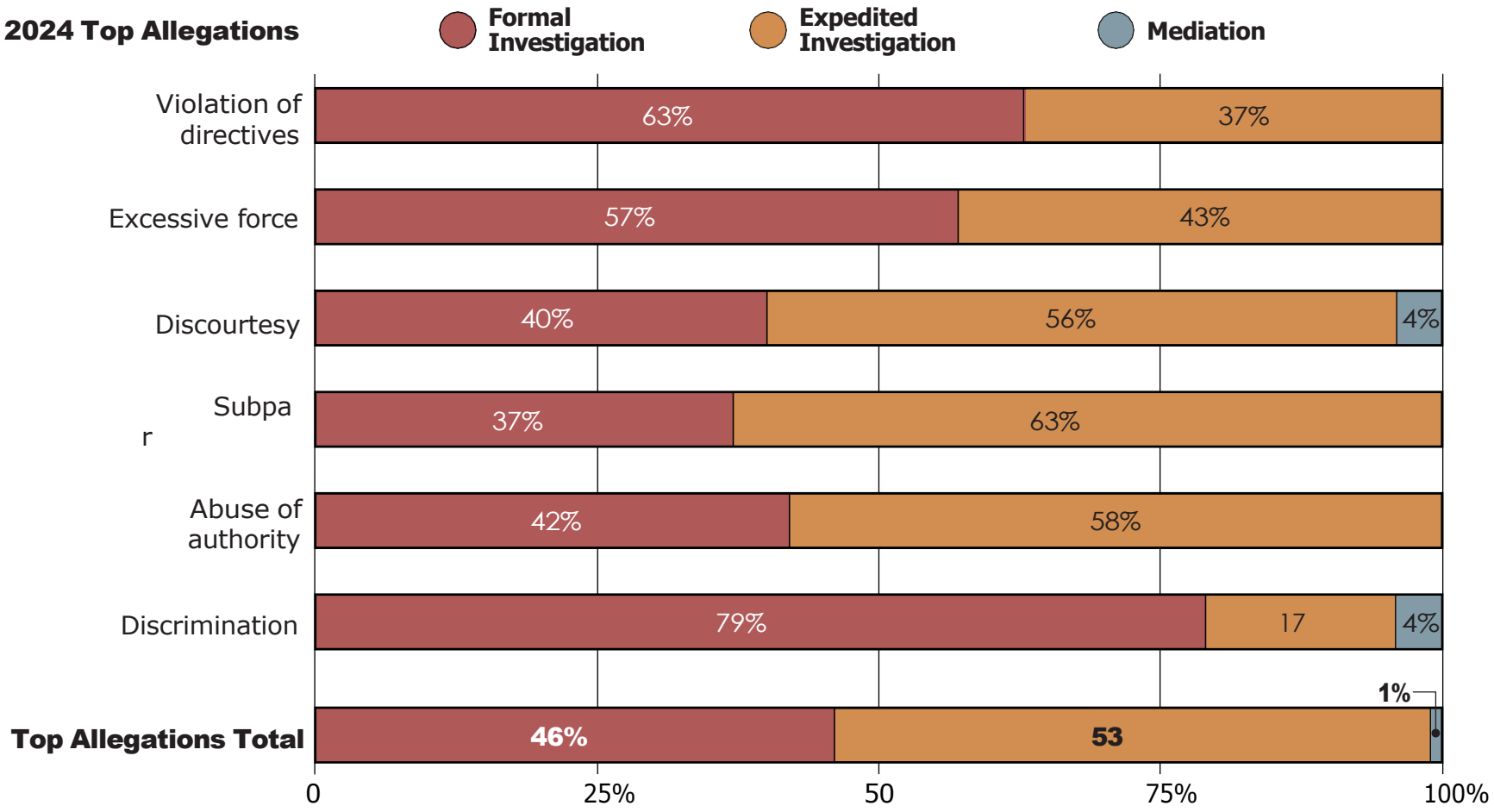
Trends in External Allegations and Classification

While the types of allegations commonly made by both Sheriff's Office employees and the community are similar, the classification patterns vary.

- Around 80% of all discrimination allegations were classified as formal investigations, with little difference between those from Sheriff's Office employees and those from the community. Allegations of violation of directives were also classified similarly no matter where they originated, with around 60% as formal investigations.
- In contrast, most (81%) internal allegations of subpar performance were classified as formal investigations, whereas the same external allegations were mostly (63%) classified as expedited investigations. Likewise, most (67%) internal allegations of discourtesy were classified as formal investigations, while external allegations of discourtesy were mostly (58%) classified as expedited investigations.

The top six external allegations previously discussed are broken down by complaint classification below in Figure 6.

Figure 6: *Top External Allegations by Classification Type in 2024*



Note: Percentages have been rounded. Also see **Appendix D: Top External Allegations by Classification Subcategory Type in 2024**.

Monitoring Investigations

OLEO monitors and reviews the Sheriff's Office's handling of complaints to promote thorough, objective, and timely investigations. Investigations are reviewed according to criteria set by the King County Council and OLEO.

What does OLEO ask when monitoring and reviewing investigations?

- Were all material witnesses identified and thoroughly interviewed?
- Was all relevant evidence obtained and, if not obtained, was it due to the investigator's actions?
- Was the subject employee provided proper notice of the complaint allegations?
- Was there any conflict of interest in fact or appearance between the investigator(s) and any of the persons involved in the incident?
- Were interviews conducted using non-leading and open-ended questions?
- Were investigative reports presented in a neutral, unbiased manner?
- Were inconsistencies in evidence, credibility, and reliability addressed by the investigator?
- Was the investigation completed within 180 days?

Certified vs. Not Certified Investigations

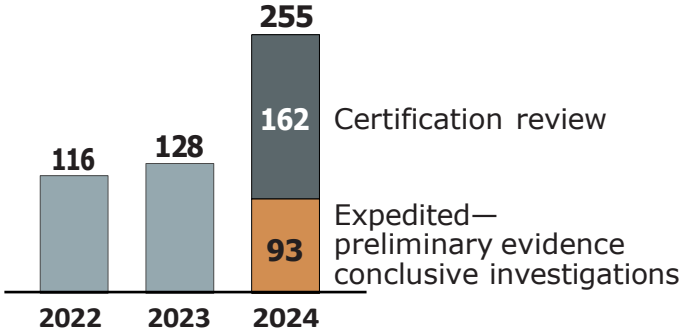
During certification review, OLEO may certify or decline to certify the investigation.

In 2024, OLEO conducted formal certification review of 162 investigations, more than double the previous year. OLEO certified 157 of those investigations and declined to certify five investigations. Most of the investigations that were not certified were investigations that were opened in previous years and failed to close within the 180-day deadline required. The single investigation that OLEO declined to certify due to reasons other than timeliness was declined because IIU interviewed the subject employee and neglected to provide OLEO with notice of the interview. As the opportunity to participate in subject employee interviews is critical in OLEO's oversight role, OLEO declined to certify that investigation. It should be noted that this investigation happened in early 2024 and OLEO did not decline to certify an investigation on that basis for the remainder of the reporting year

In addition, out of investigations closed in 2024, OLEO agreed to expediting 121 investigations, including 93 of them with preliminary evidence being conclusive. Like certification reviews, reviewing expedited investigations is a comprehensive process that ensures that the preliminary investigation is thorough and free of bias. While much of the increase in investigations reviewed is due to increased staffing,[4] OLEO also credits increased coordination with IIU and better access to information for the improvement. Hopefully this trend will continue in the coming year.

[4] The OLEO Investigations team was staffed at 80% for most of 2024.

Figure 7: *Full Investigations Reviewed by OLEO, 2022-2024*



157 certified by OLEO (97%)

Up from **68** in 2023

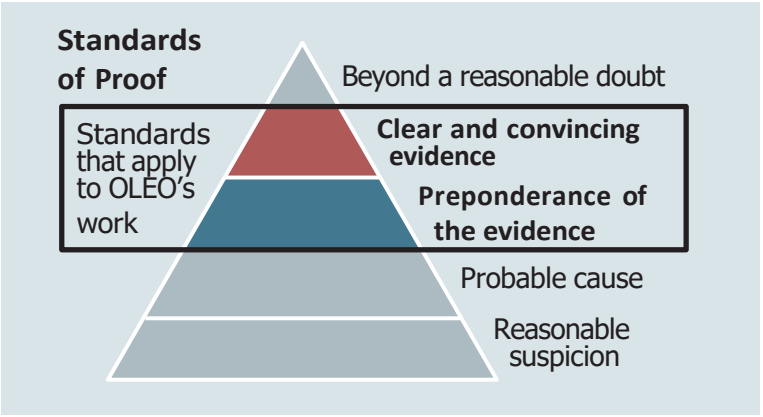
5 OLEO declined to certify (3%)

Up from **3** in 2023

Investigations Findings

Sheriff's Office Findings

Following the fact-gathering portion of the investigation, the Sheriff's Office issues a finding, or disposition, for each allegation in the complaint. According to Sheriff's Office policies, the standard of proof to sustain an allegation generally requires a "preponderance of evidence" (i.e., "more probable than not") that the policy violation occurred based on the facts. However, if criminal or serious misconduct is alleged, and there is a likelihood of suspension, demotion, or termination, the standard of proof is raised to "clear and convincing evidence" (i.e., "far more likely to be true than false").



The Sheriff's Office utilized one of five disposition categories for each allegation.

Sustained
The allegation is supported by sufcient factual evidence and was a violation of policy.

Non-sustained
There is insufcient factual evidence either to prove or disprove the allegation.

Unfounded
The allegation is not factual, and/or the incident did not occur as described.

Exonerated
The alleged incident occurred, but was lawful and proper.

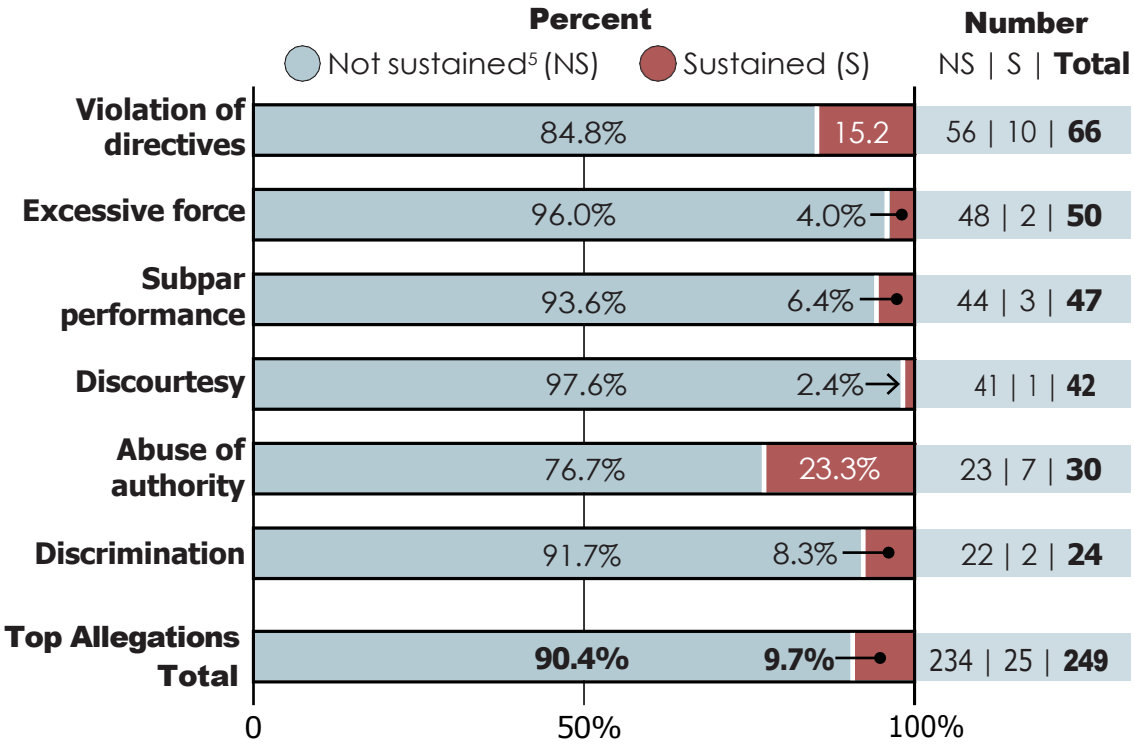
Undetermined
The completed investigation does not meet the criteria of the above categories.

In investigations closed during 2024, 81% of fully investigated allegations of misconduct from the community were concluded with the Sheriff's Office employee being exonerated, or a finding that the allegation was unfounded. For the purposes of this Annual Report, investigations that resulted in performance-related training but no other forms of corrective action/ discipline are labeled as sustained investigations and are included in analyses. Fourteen percent of investigated allegations were sustained, including those that resulted in performance-related training for the employee as the corrective action. When compared with 2023, a greater percentage of allegations were closed with conclusive findings.

Fully investigated external allegations closed in 2024 include those in formal investigations, expedited investigations with preliminary evidence conclusive, and inquiries classified under the previous system. Eighty-two percent of these allegations (259) are within the top six types previously described, and are shown in Figure 8. In this group, 9.7% of the allegations were closed with sustained dispositions (including performance-related training). Some allegations were sustained at rates much higher than this group rate.

When examining the group of these same top six allegation types originating from Sheriff's Office employees, the total sustain rate is 61%. Much, but not all, of this difference is accounted for by allegations related to training needs or minor policy violations.

Figure 8. *Top External Allegations Sustained Rate in 2024*

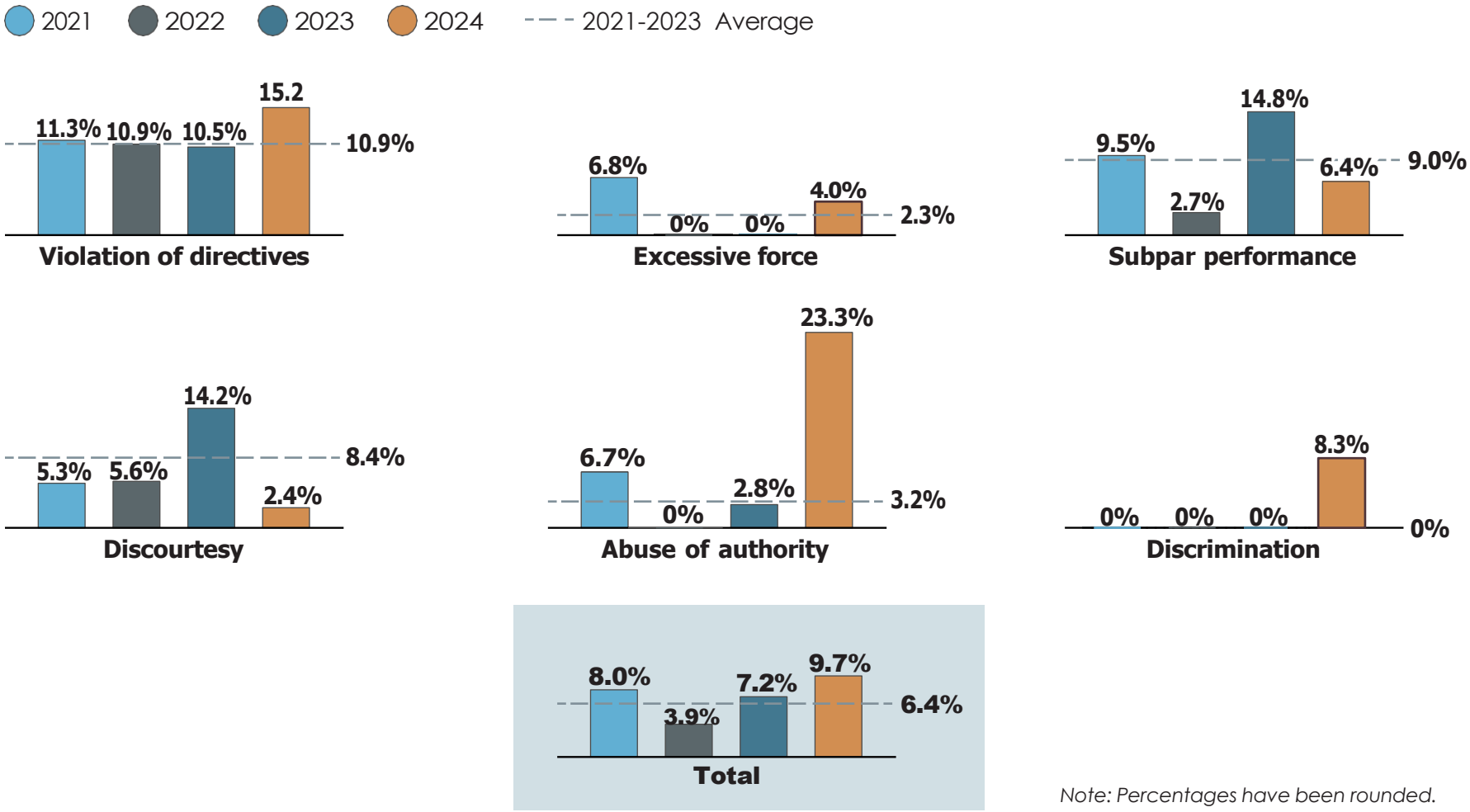


Note: Percentages have been rounded.

5 "Not sustained" is not to be confused with the specific disposition of "non-sustained," which is generally reserved for investigations where there is not enough evidence to make a conclusive finding. The "not sustained" column includes all dispositions other than sustained, viz. unfounded, exonerated, non-sustained, or undetermined.

Compared to the equivalent group of top allegations for investigations closed in 2023, these allegations were sustained at a higher rate. However, there are individual differences in how frequently certain allegations were sustained between the years as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9. *Top External Allegations Sustained Rates for 2021-2024*



Note: Percentages have been rounded.

Investigations Findings

OLEO Findings Recommendations

OLEO has the authority to recommend independent investigative findings, or dispositions. Through this authority, OLEO can propose alternative analyses and dispositions for the Sheriff's Office to consider before it finalizes its decision.

Once an investigation is concluded, IIU submits the evidence to the subject employee's Section Commander (typically a Captain or Major) for findings. That Commander will draft a recommended findings report for review by the relevant Division Chief who will either concur or disagree and send the investigation to the Undersheriff who will make a recommendation for any applicable discipline. OLEO has the right to review the commander-level findings and potentially issue its own recommended findings for review by the Division Chief and Undersheriff.

Throughout 2024, OLEO engaged closely with the Sheriff's Office regarding many findings. In some instances, OLEO recommended its own findings; in others, OLEO held conversations with Sheriff's Office command staff and leadership, and reached agreement informally. We will analyze a few notable findings below.

Use of Force

In IIU2023-047, deputies responded to an assault call to find the complainant actively assaulting another person, and they immediately arrested the complainant. The complainant actively resisted the arrest and, after being handcuffed and placed in the police car, began striking his head against the inside of the car. Two deputies attempted to restrain the complainant in the car to stop him from hurting himself, with one attempting to secure him from the shoulders and another from the legs. The complainant kicked the latter deputy three times in the leg, groin, and chest. At that point, the subject employee intervened and punched the complainant several times in the chest. Upon witnessing this, other deputies restrained and pulled the subject employee away from the complainant.

The Sheriff's Office enlisted another law enforcement agency to review the incident for potential criminal violations. That agency determined there was probable cause to forward charges to the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, and the Prosecuting Attorney's Office agreed and filed charges. A trial was held, and the subject employee was found not guilty.

In the administrative investigation, the initial recommendation by the Sheriff's Office Major was to not sustain the allegation of excessive force. However, the Division Chief disagreed, recommending instead to sustain the allegation of excessive force, and Sheriff's Office leadership concurred.

> **In reaching a sustained finding, the Division Chief and Sheriff's Office leadership found that, even though that level of force may be used in response to active resistance, it still must be necessary if it is to fall within policy. The force used by the subject employee—direct punches—was unnecessary and therefore fell outside of policy.**

Initially, OLEO was going to draft findings for this investigation. However, after being informed that the allegation of excessive force was going to be sustained, OLEO decided not to draft additional findings for the sake of efficiency.

Search and Seizure[6]

OLEO recommended findings in three investigations involving search and seizure. In all three investigations, initial recommendations by the Sheriff's Office Major were to exonerate the subject employees of at least one allegation related to improper search or seizure. After OLEO issued its findings, the recommendations for one of the investigations was changed to sustained by the Chief, and for another, the finding was changed to sustained by the Undersheriff.

In IIU2023-189, the subject employee followed an erratically driven car into an apartment complex. The subject employee had earlier looked up the car's license plate and found that the registered owner of the vehicle had an outstanding warrant. The subject employee claimed that another person he found in the apartment complex matched the description of the person he was looking for. The subject employee was looking for a 37-year-old Black male with a light complexion, standing at 5'9", weighing 190 pounds, sporting a short beard and twisted locks long enough to cover his ears, and wearing jeans and a white jacket. Backup arrived while the subject employee was still looking around the apartment complex, after which the subject employees made contact with the complainant. The complainant was 10 years younger and 40 pounds lighter, had a darker complexion and a very short haircut, and was wearing a black jacket and dark sweatpants. When the complainant insisted he was not the person for whom the subject employee was looking and refused to give his name, the subject employees arrested him for obstruction.

[6] Some investigations included multiple allegations; however, this summary is focused on specific allegations related to protections against inappropriate searches or seizures, whether based on the Fourth Amendment or state or county laws.

OLEO asserted that the subject employees did not have reasonable suspicion to detain the complainant because he did not match the description, and, even if they did, the subject employees did not have probable cause to arrest the complainant. The Sheriff's Office agreed with OLEO that the arrest was without probable cause and sustained the allegations.

In IIU2024-084, the subject employees observed a car parked in front of a residence noted as the site of previous criminal activity with a person slumped inside of it. The subject employees, who admit that they had not observed any evidence of a crime, did not attempt to rouse the complainant or speak to him, but instead opened the car door.

The Sheriff's Office Major recommended exonerating the subject employees, and OLEO recommended sustaining the allegations. The Chief changed the recommendation to non-sustained, but the Undersheriff agreed with OLEO and sustained the allegations.

In its findings, OLEO relied on a nearly identical arrest from King County in which a court found that "merely being…slumped down in a parked car at midday, even in a community with an opioid epidemic, is inadequate to justify an officer opening a car door without first briefly attempting to speak to or otherwise rouse the suspected overdose victim."[7]

Unlike in the previous two investigations, in IIU2024-131, the Sheriff's Office insisted on an exonerated finding despite OLEO's recommendation to sustain allegations. In this investigation, the subject employees were investigating an alleged assault and robbery when the victim informed them that he believed the assailant was the complainant, who lived in an apartment above his sister's unit. Searching for the complainant, the subject employees went to that apartment where they received permission from the apparent children of the complainant to enter the home and search it; they did not find the complainant. The issue in this investigation was whether the subject employees complied with Sheriff's Office policies as well as state and county laws that require deputies to provide juveniles with access to an attorney before requesting a search.

[7] *State v. Harris*, No. 77987-7-1, Court of Appeals of Washington, Division 1 (2019).

The exonerated finding itself is subject to good-faith disagreement between the Sheriff's Office and OLEO; accordingly, OLEO did not escalate this case. However, OLEO finds the reasoning behind the findings problematic, mainly the disregard for the plain language of Sheriff's Office policy, state law, and county law.

After noting that it is based on state and county laws, GOM 12.07.055 states that "deputies shall provide a juvenile with access to an attorney for consultation" before, among other things, "requesting that a juvenile consent to an evidentiary search of their person, property, dwelling, or vehicle." The corresponding state law, RCW 13.40.740, and King County Code 2.63.020 contain identical requirements. King County Code 2.63.020(B) also clarifies that a juvenile's ability to consult with an attorney before giving consent to a search cannot be waived and must be provided "regardless of the youth's custody status."

Despite this clarity, Sheriff's Office findings claimed the policy was "ambiguous" and that a survey of others within the Sheriff's Office found that there was general agreement that it only applied to juveniles who were suspected of crimes. That reading is not supported by the text of the policy or the law and runs the risk of defeating their purpose. The Sheriff's Office must clarify its understanding of the policy and inform its employees of its true meaning. A recent attempt to do this by the Sheriff's Office was insufficient.

Discrimination

OLEO recommended findings in three investigations with allegations of discrimination, harassment, incivility, and bigotry, in violation of GOM 3.00.015(1)(g). This provision of the GOM forbids, among other things, discussions that belittle others on the basis of protected class, such as gender, race, and national origin.[8] All three investigations in which OLEO recommended findings involved subject employees making belittling remarks about community members based on their ethnicity or national origin. The Sheriff's Office's findings in these investigations revealed inconsistent concern about discrimination against different groups and a possible reluctance to sustain discrimination allegations, even in instances where the subject employee admits to the conduct.

[8] In August of 2024, the Sheriff's Office amended the allegations listed in GOM 3.00.015 and discriminatory comments are now considered inappropriate conduct, in violation of GOM 3.00.015(2)(g).

In IIU2023-241, a deputy alleged that she heard the subject employee (who is originally from Romania) refer to Roma people[9] as "gypsies" and make derogatory remarks about them in front of members of the public. Four additional members of the subject employee's squad reported hearing him discuss Roma people negatively, with one witness officer summarizing the subject employee's remarks as stating that, "This is a culture that will commit crimes." The subject employee was also recorded on body-worn camera berating an arrestee from Moldova[10] for committing crimes because, as he told another deputy, "It's so unusual for those people to do this kind of stuff." The subject employee openly explained these views in his interview with investigators, stating that the term "gypsy" referred to an ethnic group that is found throughout Europe and "now, unfortunately, we have them in the United States." The subject employee also claimed that all Roma people are involved in crime because they must regularly pay tribute money to their clan leaders and, if any Roma person appears to have a legitimate job, it is merely a front for criminal activity.[11]

OLEO recommended that the Sheriff's Office sustain the discrimination allegation against the subject employee because his repeated comments about the Roma people constituted national origin discrimination. The Sheriff's Office declined to adopt OLEO's recommendation because it believed that being Roma is an "ethnicity" and thus not protected by the GOM's prohibition against discrimination. This reasoning is unsound as it is well established that national origin discrimination includes discrimination against ethnic groups.

Both the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and courts have recognized the Roma as protected by prohibitions against national origin discrimination. Further, the Sheriff's Office has rightfully sustained at least one discrimination allegation involving comments about Hispanic community members, another ethnic group. This refusal to engage with anti-Roma bias thus sets a dangerous precedent of differential treatment. OLEO escalated the case to Sheriff's Office leadership, but the findings were not changed.

[9] The Roma, or Romani, people are an ethnic group with concentrated populations in Eastern Europe. Approximately 1 million Roma people live in the United States.
[10] Moldova is a European country that borders Romania. Its official language is Romanian.
[11] The U.S. State Department considers using the term "gypsy" as a slur and stereotyping the Roma as persons who engage in criminal behavior as manifestations of anti-Roma bias. Additional information can be found at https://www.state.gov/defining-anti-roma-racism/. (The current U.S. Administration has been purging civil rights-related information from various federal governmental websites related to what it incorrectly and pejoratively identifies as "DEI" (diversity, equity, and inclusion) material. Because this process of purging has been haphazard, **Appendix E: Defining Anti-Roma Racism** contains the most recent version of this page, in case it gets removed.)

By contrast, the Sheriff's Office sustained an allegation of ethnic discrimination in IIU2023-235. The complainant in the case alleged that the subject employee overheard her and her fiancé speaking Spanish with a security screener and stated, "This is America, speak English." A court coordinator was standing near the subject employee and also heard his remark. When the complainant requested a sergeant's information so she could make a complaint, the subject employee gave her a business card with *his* personal cell phone number and a sergeant's name handwritten on it.[12] In his interview with investigators, the subject employee admitted that he made the statement, but claimed that he said it "quietly" so that only the court coordinator would hear. The subject employee also explained that he had recently traveled overseas and, based on his experiences there, believed it would be to the complainant's fiancé's "honest benefit" to learn English.

The Sheriff's Office initially proposed not sustaining the discrimination allegation because it believed the subj ct employee sought to "instruct" the complainant and her fiancé about the difficulties of not speaking English in the United States. OLEO recommended that the allegation be sustained because it would not make sense for the subject employee to make the statement quietly if he earnestly intended it as a helpful instruction to the complainant. The Sheriff's Office ultimately agreed with OLEO's recommendation and sustained the allegation.

In another apparent inconsistency, the Sheriff's Office did not apply this same scrutiny to the subject employee's stated motives for making a discriminatory statement against a Hispanic community member in IIU2023-205. The complainant in that investigation, who the subject employee identified in his report as a Hispanic man, verbally argued with the subject employee when he responded to a domestic violence call at the complainant's cousin's home. As shown in body-worn camera video, during the encounter, the complainant asked for the subject employee's sergeant and told him that he was going to get in "big trouble," to which the subject employee dismissively responded, "OK, papi." The complainant believed that the subject employee intended the remark as a homophobic taunt because he was gay. In his interview with investigators, the subject employee explained that he made the comment to undercut the complainant's authority and "to basically, firmly put him in his place." He also stated that he speaks Spanish near fluently and was not familiar with the term "papi" having homophobic connotations. When asked why he used that term specifically, the subject employee suggested that he may have slipped into conversational Spanish during the incident.

[12] The Sheriff's Office brought an allegation of dishonesty against the subject employee for this conduct. OLEO recommended that this allegation be sustained, but the Sheriff's Office declined to accept the recommendation.

OLEO recommended that the allegation of discrimination be sustained because, by his own admission, the subject employee perceived the complainant as Hispanic, intended to undercut the complainant and "put him in his place," and did so by utilizing a Spanish term which he would not have otherwise used.

OLEO also observed that it was improbable that the subject employee spontaneously switched to using Spanish when everyone on the scene was speaking English exclusively for several minutes. The Sheriff's Office rejected OLEO's proposed reasoning.

Instead of considering use of the term from both angles—both regarding sexual orientation and ethnicity—the Sheriff's Office found that the allegations could not be sustained solely on the basis that the subject employee did not know that the complainant was gay. OLEO agreed that there was no evidence to sustain an allegation based the use of a homophobic slur, but insisted that the allegation should be sustained based on belittling the complainant in Spanish because of his ethnicity.

Notably, in its written findings in this investigation, the Sheriff's Office commented that the subject employee's use of "papi" should be addressed by training because it "was not consistent with de-escalation principles." The Sheriff's Office's findings in IIU2023-241 (also not sustained) similarly recommended that the subject employee receive training because his comments "reflect flawed ways of thinking."

This tension between insisting that a subject employee did not commit wrongdoing yet still suggesting that the conduct needed to be remedied suggests a possible reluctance to sustain discrimination allegations against employees because of the weight such an allegation carries.

This reluctance may also have contributed to the fact that the Sheriff's Office did not sustain a single allegation of discrimination between 2020 and 2023. In August of 2024, the Sheriff's Office created an additional category of misconduct, inappropriate conduct, which covers conduct that may not rise to discrimination but that nevertheless communicates a negative message based on a complainant's membership in a protected class. Going forward, OLEO will continue to review the Sheriff's Office's findings in discrimination and inappropriate conduct investigations for consistency and accuracy.

Corrective Action and Appeal

Corrective Action

The Sheriff's Office may provide corrective counseling or training or impose discipline when a finding is sustained. This includes expedited investigations that resulted in a disposition of performance-related training (and considered as sustained for the purposes of this Annual Report), which is considered corrective and not discipline. Due to collective-bargaining restrictions, OLEO cannot make discipline recommendations or comment on specific instances of discipline at this time.

The group of sustained top six external allegations previously discussed had corrective action imposed on the subject employee as shown in Figure 9. Training or corrective counseling of all types was the corrective action or discipline for 84% of these allegations. When examining some of the same top allegation types originating from Sheriff's Office employees, training or corrective counseling was less common, imposed for 70% of these allegations.

However, among all the sustained allegations in 2024, internal allegations had training imposed as the corrective action more frequently than those from the community.

Table 1. *Primary Corrective Action or Discipline for Sustained Top External Allegations in 2024*

Allegation	**Number**	**Sustained**, *including performance-related training (PRT)*
Violation of directives	**66**	**10**
		PRT: 8
		Corrective counseling memo: 1
		No action: 1
Excessive force	**50**	**2**
		PRT: 1
		Suspension: 1
Subpar performance	**47**	**3**
		PRT: 3
Discourtesy	**42**	**1**
		Verbal counseling: 1
Abuse of authority	**30**	**7**
		PRT: 2
		Training: 5
Discrimination	**24**	**2**
		Suspension: 1
		Termination: 1

Note: "No action" is used when discipline cannot be issued, as when an employee resigned.

Table 2: *Comparison of Corrective Action or Discipline for Sustained Allegations by Origin in 2024*

Corrective action	Percent of sustained **external allegations** with corrective action imposed	Percent of sustained **internal allegations** with corrective action imposed
Training and corrective counseling: 61%		
Performance-related training	35%	55%
Training	12%	0%
Verbal counseling	5%	0%
Corrective counseling memo	2%	9%
Progressive discipline: 36%		
Written reprimand	2%	21%
Suspension	23%	13%
Termination	14%	0%
No corrective action: 4%		
No action	7%	2%

Note: Percentages have been rounded.

Grievances, Settlements, or Arbitrations (Appeals)

Discipline imposed by the Sheriff's Office may change through the grievance and arbitration process as a result of a management decision in the collective bargaining agreement's grievance hearings, a discipline settlement agreement reached between the County and the employee's union, or a final arbitral award from the Public Employment Relations Commission's Law Enforcement Disciplinary Grievance Arbitration Panel. Below are investigations that have been subject to the grievance and arbitration process in 2024.

Table 3. *Grievances, Settlements, or Arbitrations Occurring in 2024*

Status	Case number	Sustained allegations	Discipline imposed by Sheriff's Office[13]	Grievance/Settlement/Arbitration status or outcome
Resolved	**IIU2023-075**	Violation of directives; Conduct unbecoming	Termination	Termination upheld at Arbitration (i.e., no change in outcome).
Resolved	**IIU2023-092**	Criminal conduct; Conduct unbecoming; Discrimination; Ridicule	Termination	Termination upheld through grievance steps. The King County Police Officers Guild decided not to proceed to arbitration (i.e., no change in outcome).
Resolved	**IIU2023-118**	Inappropriate conduct	One-day suspension	Suspension upheld though grievance steps. The King County Police Officers Guild withdrew arbitration demand (i.e., no change in outcome) as a part of settlement combining this and another investigation (IIU2024-205).
Resolved	**IIU2023-118**	Inappropriate Conduct; Ridicule	Written reprimand	Sustained finding reversed to non-sustained at Grievance Step 1.
Resolved	**IIU2023-152**	Violation of directives; Subpar performance	One-day suspension	Discipline reduced to written reprimand and 40 hours of prescriptive training at Grievance Step 2.

[13] For purposes of this Annual Report, discipline imposed by the Sheriff's Office refers to the initial discipline decision made by the Sheriff, and when required, after a *Loudermill* hearing has occurred or been waived. A *Loudermill* hearing must be offered for all discipline decisions that impact an employee's compensation (e.g., termination, suspension, demotion, loss of specialty assignment pay) and requires notice of the proposed discipline and an opportunity for the employee to explain and refute any findings that are the basis of the proposed discipline before imposition.

Table 3. *Grievances, Settlements, or Arbitrations Occurring in 2024* continued

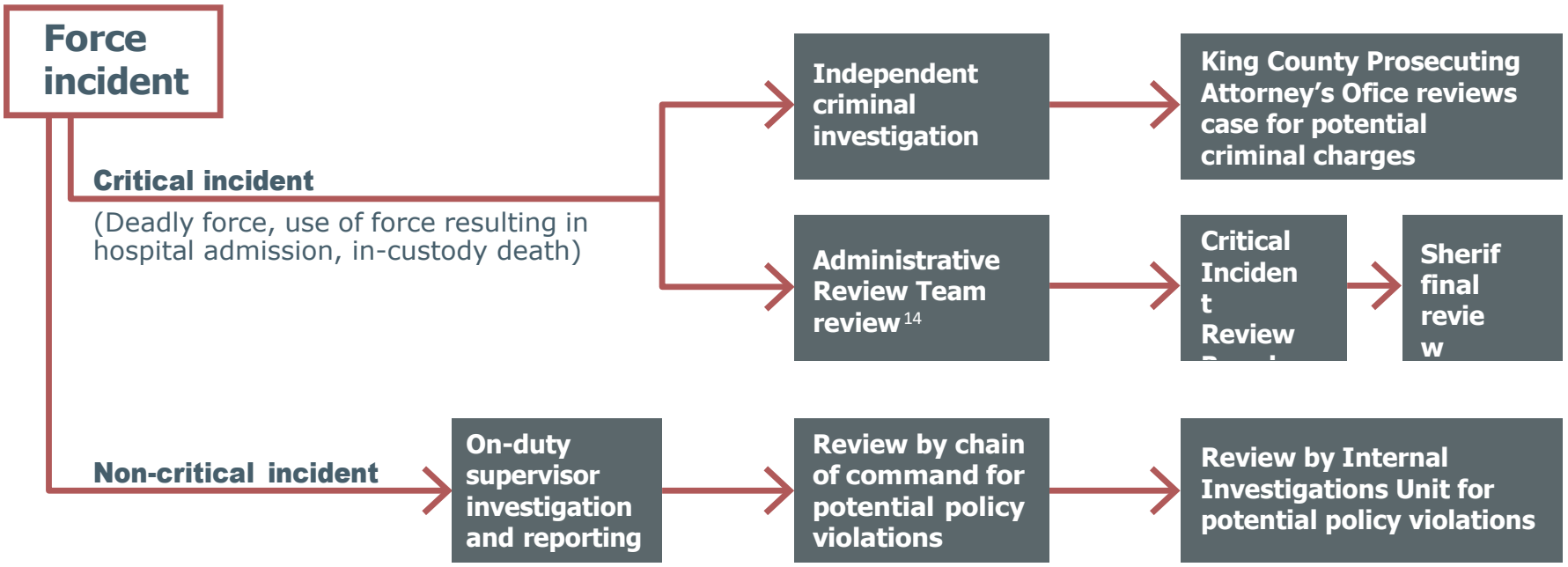
Status	Case number	Sustained allegations	Discipline imposed by Sheriff's Office[13]	Grievance/Settlement/Arbitration status or outcome
Resolved	**IIU2023-180**	Being under the influence while off-duty resulting in charges; False statements; Conduct unbecoming	Termination	Termination upheld through grievance steps. The King County Police Officers Guild decided to not proceed to arbitration (i.e., no change in outcome).
Resolved	**IIU2023-239**	Subpar performance	One-day suspension	Suspension upheld at Grievance Step 1, and grievance dropped at Grievance Step 2 (i.e., no change in outcome).
Resolved	**IIU2023-250**	Obedience to laws; Ethics and conflicts	Two-day suspension	Discipline reduced by settlement to written reprimand at Grievance Step 3.
Pending	**IIU2023-047**	Excessive force; Conduct unbecoming	Two-week suspension	Suspension upheld at Grievance Step 2, pending Grievance Step 3 decision.
Pending	**IIU2024-024**	Violation of directives; Conduct unbecoming	One-day suspension	Suspension upheld through grievance steps, proceeding to arbitration.
Pending	**IIU2024-125**	Conduct unbecoming	Two-week suspension, including one week held in abeyance	Suspension upheld through grievance steps, proceeding to arbitration.

Critical Incidents and Reportable Use of Force

Critical Incidents

Critical incidents could be force incidents that resulted in either death or serious injury, deaths that occurred under the custody of the Sheriff 's Office, or use of deadly force, regardless of whether any contact or injury occurred.

OLEO's role in reviewing critical incidents includes attending and observing the processing of scenes of officer-involved shootings and serious uses of force. OLEO has authority to monitor the administrative investigation and attend force reviews for critical incidents.

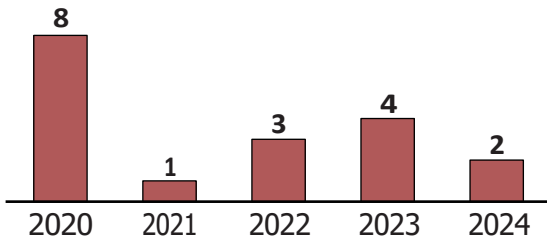


[14] While the administrative and criminal investigations run parallel in theory, the Sheriff's Office generally waits for a charging decision by King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office before completing its administrative investigation.

ART2024-003: Shooting

One officer shooting resulted in a critical incident in 2024, when Sheriff's Office Tac30 personnel fatally shot the tenant of an apartment, Mr. Michael Vaughn, during an attempted eviction. In March of 2024, the Sheriff's Office Civil Unit received orders to enforce the eviction of a tenant at an apartment complex in Auburn. When the Civil Unit attempted the eviction, the tenant refused to leave, threatened violence against the deputies, and indicated that he had access to firearms. The deputies left the premises without enforcing the eviction. They returned several weeks later with the assistance of the Crisis Negotiation Team and a Tac30 team. The Tac30 team parked an armored vehicle outside the unit and the Crisis Negotiation Team gave instructions over the loudspeaker to the tenant to exit the unit. The tenant came to the window of the unit armed with an AR-15-style rifle. The Tac30 team attempted to speak with the tenant who appeared to become more agitated as they spoke. The Tac30 team then deployed tasers and 40mm less-lethal rounds in an attempt to subdue the tenant. These methods failed and the tenant opened fire on the Tac30 team with his rifle. The Tac30 team returned fire, striking the tenant in the chest and knocking him to the ground. The Tac30 team then entered the unit and attempted to administer medical aid to the tenant. The tenant died of his injuries on the scene. OLEO responded to the scene. The investigation by the Valley Independent Investigative Team has been completed and the review by the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (KCPAO) is currently pending.

Figure 10. *Critical Incidents, 2020-2024*



2024 had the fewest critical incidents in one year since 2021.

ART2024-005: Use of K-9

The other critical incident in 2024 involved the use of a police dog (K-9) to immobilize and arrest a person suspected of a crime, Mr. Vincent Robinson, resulting in injuries to his arm that required surgery. In July of 2024, a Sheriff's Office deputy and his K-9 assisted Auburn Police, including their SWAT unit, in arresting a man suspected of shooting his girlfriend the evening before. The suspect was in a neighbor's apartment, and the neighbor consented to the police entering the apartment to carry out the arrest. The methodical search of the home included the deputy letting his K-9 enter some rooms first, because there was no response to repeated calls for the suspect to come out. In one of the rooms, the K-9 located the suspect and bit him on the arm, causing punctures and injuries to the arm that required surgery. The Administrative Review Team completed its review of the incident and concluded that the use of force was within policy. Per state law, this critical incident did not necessitate an investigation by an independent investigative team or a review by KCPAO.

Critical Incident Updates (2022-2023)

ART2022-003: Shooting death of Mr. Derrick Ellis. The Critical Incident Review Board found the deputies' action to be within policy. KCPAO declined prosecution, finding that Mr. Ellis' "action of pointing the firearm at a deputy is sufficient to find that there was probable cause that he posed a threat of serious physical harm to the involved deputies." [15]

ART2022-004: In-custody death of Mr. Lamond Dukes. The investigation by the Valley Independent Investigative Team has been completed and review by KCPAO is currently pending.[16]

ART2023-001: Non-fatal shooting of Mr. Abdinjib Ali Ibraham. The Critical Incident Review Board has been completed, finding the deputies' actions to be within policy. KCPAO declined prosecution, finding that the officers "acted in good faith and were justified in using deadly force against Mr. Ibraham." [17]

[15] Decline Memorandum, Use of Force – Fatality of Derrick Ellis, https://cdn.kingcounty.gov/-/media/king-county/depts/pao/documents/public-integrity/use-of-force-fatalities/2022/ellis-derrick-public-memo---redacted.pdf.
[16] Prosecuting Attorney's Office – 2022 incidents, Prosecuting Attorney's Office – 2022 incidents - King County, Washington.
[17] Decline Memorandum, Use of Force Non-Fatality, Abdinjib Ibraham, https://cdn.kingcounty.gov/-/media/king-county/depts/pao/documents/public-integrity/use-of-force-non-fatalities/2023/ibraham-abdinjib-public-memo---redacted.pdf.

Use of Force

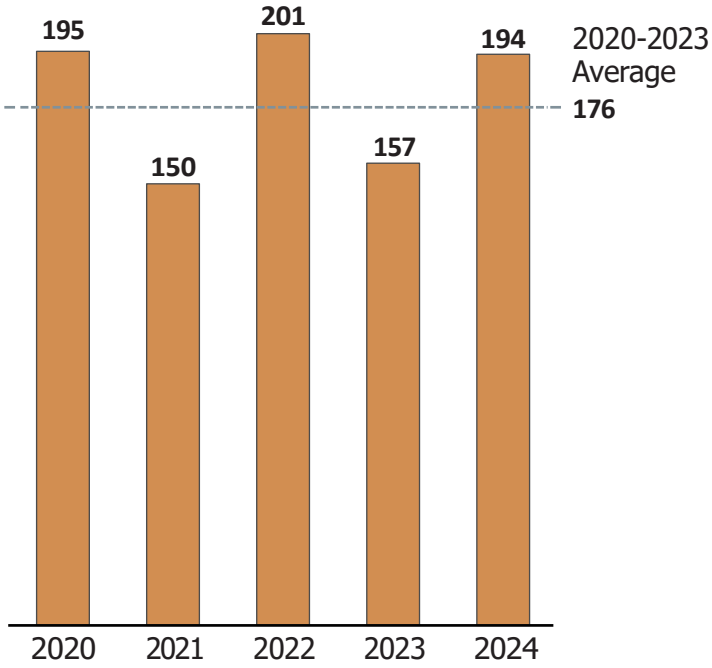
Deputies who use force on an individual that meets the Sheriff's Office's criteria for reporting are required to call a sergeant in most instances. The Sheriff's Office has three categories for reportable force.[18]

Level I, for example, includes control holds and "show of force" by displaying a firearm but does not require a supervisor to respond to the scene unless a complaint is made.

Level II, for example, includes using a Taser or pepper spray, K-9 bites, aiming a firearm at a person, hitting or striking someone with hands, feet, or an object, and any other force that results in injury or complaint of injury. Except for aiming a firearm, a supervisor is required to respond to the scene.

Level III, for example, includes discharge of a firearm toward a person, a strike to the head, neck or throat with a hard object, or any other actions or means reasonably likely to cause death or serious physical injury. A supervisor is required to respond to the scene and the Commander must also be notified.

Figure 11. *Use of Force, 2020-2024*



[18] GOM 6.01.015.

Policy and Practices

Policy Reviews

OLEO provides feedback and recommendations on specific policies in the Sheriff's Office General Orders Manual and on various Standard Operating Procedures. OLEO's policy recommendations aim to prioritize equity and reflect community interests, legal standards, and law enforcement best practices. Below are select highlights of OLEO's recommendations in 2024.

Policy status key: Adopted | Partially adopted | Pending | Not adopted | Not yet published by OLEO

Use of Force (GOM 6.00.000), Investigation/Reporting Use of Force & Serious Incidents (GOM 6.01.000), and Less Lethal Weapons (GOM 6.03.000) Link to memo

In 2024, OLEO issued recommendations aimed at ensuring the Sheriff's Office's use of force policies are in line with the Washington State Attorney General's Office Model Use of Force Policy and reflect law enforcement best practices. The memo included three recommendations reissued from OLEO's February 2023 memo to clarify the language around standards of "necessary, proportional, and reasonable" for the use of physical force and the issuance of warnings prior to the use of physical force, and to implement stricter standards on when deputies may use force to prevent fleeing a temporary investigative stop. Additionally, OLEO included three new policy recommendations to limit the use of Taser Energy Weapons on handcuffed persons, explicitly define the term less lethal weapons, and to restore prior policy language on reporting standards when pointing and aiming a less lethal weapon.

Executing Search Warrants/Planned Events (GOM 5.12.000) Link to memo

After several rounds of review and discussion with the Sheriff's Office, OLEO issued recommendations aimed at improving transparency and accountability surrounding planned operations and promoting best practices for search warrant operations. In response to OLEO's recommendations, the Sheriff's Office adopted the majority of these policy changes into the GOM including promoting tactics which can reduce risk for officers and the subjects of warrants, incorporating language on proper notice and considerations for making a forced entry, and reporting and documentation of search warrant operations.

However, the Sheriff's Office did not adopt recommendations regarding additional data collection and reporting, standardization of documentation and planning for assessing the risk of an operation, and requiring the presence of crisis negotiators at higher risk operations.

Policy status key: Adopted | Partially adopted | Pending | Not adopted | Not yet published by OLEO

Traffic Enforcement and Safety

In response to feedback from its community partners, OLEO began work to review the Sheriff's Office policies regarding traffic enforcement and safety. This will be OLEO's first policy review using the Community Guidance Framework, a new process OLEO and its community partners designed to review and develop policy recommendations in direct collaboration and consultation with community. At the end of 2024, OLEO began work to collect community input on their priorities and concerns regarding traffic enforcement and safety in King County. These efforts included three in-person listening sessions and a survey which garnered 187 responses. This policy work and forthcoming recommendations to the Sheriff's Office will continue into 2025.

Reports

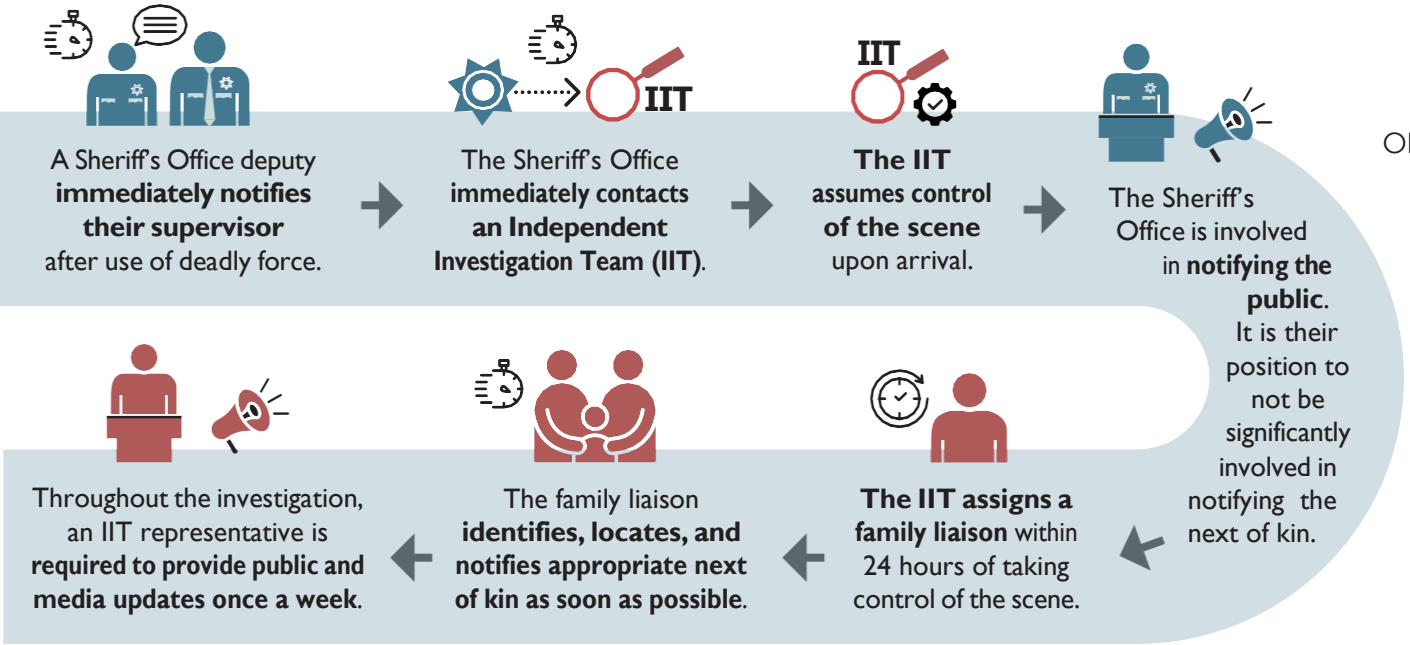
Trauma-Informed Notifications [Link to report]

In 2024, OLEO issued a report that aimed to answer the question: How can the Sheriff's Office use a trauma-informed lens to speak with community members after a critical incident?

This report examined the legal and policy landscape governing notifications and public communication after a critical incident, current Sheriff's Office policy, and national research and best practices for incorporating trauma-informed notifications.

"Critical incident" is an umbrella term that includes three scenarios that require notification. These incidents are treated differently in terms of the procedures of investigation and who is tasked with communicating with next of kin and the public: (1) a use of deadly force which results in death or serious injury, (2) a use of non-deadly force which results in death or serious injury, and (3) an in-custody death or serious injury with no use of force.

The Sheriff's Office's current notification procedures for incidents involving deadly force are described below:



OLEO's review indicated that next of kin notification practices did not always align with the procedures above and that the Sheriff's Office did not provide notifications to the public in the majority of critical incidents reviewed.

Best Practices

OLEO referenced research literature and conducted interviews with subject matter experts in the fields of civil rights, academia, law, mental health, and victim advocacy to define best practices in trauma-informed communication surrounding critical incidents.

Next of Kin Notification

Who should deliver notification?

Research shows a variety of opinions on law enforcement involvement in notification, but there is consensus that a trauma-informed non-law enforcement professional should always be present to help deliver difficult news to next of kin of those killed or seriously injured by law enforcement.

When should the notification be delivered?

Notifications should be delivered to next of kin at the earliest possible moment.

How should the notification be delivered?

Notifications should be tailored to the unique needs of the people receiving the news and should be followed up with referrals to community-based resources to provide additional support.

How do other law enforcement departments manage next of kin critical incident notifications?

Most departments do not have policies for notifying next of kin after a critical incident. However, when they do have relevant policy guidance, it aligns with best practices of timely, respectful, clear communication that incorporates a team of both law enforcement and non-law enforcement professionals.

Public Notification

What notifications should be delivered?

Within hours, the basic facts of an incident should be released to the public and in the days following, additional relevant information like video footage should be proactively released in coordination with next of kin and investigators.

How should notifications be delivered?

Public notifications about a critical incident should be done transparently, sensitively, and using neutral language.

How do other law enforcement departments manage public critical incident notifications?

Notable department policies establish clear protocols for release of public information after a critical incident that include specific timelines, designated roles and responsibilities, and guidelines for what information can and cannot be released. Another peer agency practice is to create a clearinghouse that ensures the public can easily access and navigate information and data about critical incidents.

Recommendations

1. **Create a policy and include language in MOUs[19] for trauma-informed notification and engagement after each type of critical incident.**

a. Create a multidisciplinary family engagement team that is responsible for next of kin communication in the aftermath of a critical incident. This engagement team should:

i. Require personnel who engage with next of kin to be accompanied by non-law enforcement representatives.

ii. Require in-person engagement with next of kin whenever possible.

iii. Require personnel who engage with next of kin to be in plain clothes.

iv. Provide written materials or pamphlets to leave with next of kin.

b. Provide trauma-informed communication training for personnel to utilize in emergency circumstances.

2. **Partner with organizations that offer victim support services within King County to provide trauma informed responses and equitable, culturally competent community organization referrals.**

3. **Clarify confidentiality or lack thereof, of interactions between next of kin and independent investigator family liaisons.**

4. **Publish Independent Investigations Team protocols on the Sheriff's Office website.**

5. **Create a policy for media release after a critical incident.**

[19] Memorandums of understanding govern the Sheriff's Office involvement in critical incidents when an IIT is involved.

Recommendations *continued*

6. **Create a video release policy that includes release of critical incident footage within 72 hours and requires transparency in decision-making.**

7. **Create a data portal with easily accessible data of all critical incidents.**

Community Engagement

Community Partnerships

In 2024, OLEO engaged community-based organizations to partner on OLEO's **Community Guidance Framework** for policy reviews. OLEO met with organizations that provide services to minority communities, promote civic organizing and political advocacy, and advance social and racial equity. After initial outreach, OLEO secured five partnerships through memoranda of understanding with The Arc of Washington, Washington For Black Lives, Congolese Integration Network, Transportation Choices Coalition, and People Power Washington. Together with these partners, OLEO began work to engage diverse communities on policy topics using listening session forums and an online survey. OLEO will continue this work in 2025 to create policy recommendations that are informed by the lived experiences of community members in King County.

OLEO is looking for community-based organizations that can be a part of our policy review process. This is a process open to all, and it is especially important to collaborate with organizations that further the interests of populations that have been historically marginalized or overpoliced. Interested? Please fill out this **simple form** and OLEO will be in touch.

Community Advisory Committee for Law Enforcement Oversight

A focal point of OLEO's connection to King County communities is through the Community Advisory Committee for Law Enforcement Oversight (CACLEO). This body is up to an eleven-member Executive-appointed, Council-confirmed committee that advises and collaborates with OLEO. CACLEO also advises the King County Council and the Sheriff's Office on matters related to public safety and equity and social justice.

CACLEO represents an effort to engage with the diverse communities of King County and increase transparency of and accessibility to oversight activities and functions. Committee work in 2024 included the following:

- Support of OLEO and the Sheriff's Office in opposing enforcement of Burien city code that criminalizes homelessness
  - » **Press Release**
- Attendance at community events to increase CACLEO's presence and community awareness of oversight topics
- Expansion of outreach efforts to recruit for open CACLEO positions
- Engagement with community members on Sheriff's Office policy and procedures related to misconduct complaints

Essential Duties and Responsibilities of CACLEO Members

- Act as a liaison between OLEO and King County's diverse communities. This includes conducting outreach to communities served by the Sheriff's Office, gathering information about public perceptions and concerns relating to the Sheriff's Office, and providing the public with information about recourse for alleged law enforcement misconduct.
- Provide input and guidance on policies, procedures and practices related to policing in King County.
- Advise the King County Council and the Sheriff's Office on matters of equity and social justice related to law enforcement and on systemic problems and opportunities for improvement within the Sheriff's Office.

Qualifications of CACLEO Members

- Residency in King County, WA.
- Ability to regularly attend committee meetings. Schedules are established with committee input at the beginning of each calendar year.
- Ability to serve on at least one subcommittee and available for phone-based consultation with OLEO staff (always scheduled in advance).
- Ability to participate effectively in committee meetings, listen to and work well with other committee members, provide feedback in a respectful manner, and be open to a diversity of ideas.
- Ability to check email and make timely responses.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Interested?

- Please review the full **position description**.
- Complete the **commission application** and the **personal questions form**.
- Send the completed forms to **oleo@kingcounty.gov**.

OLEO's Community Engagement team will schedule time to speak by phone once an application is submitted. OLEO's Director will then review the application and send it to the King County Boards and Commissions liaison for consideration.

Join CACLEO!

The committee is rrently looking for w members to joi !

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Appendix A: Notes about Data

- OLEO maintains its own database and updates it regularly by viewing and reviewing case files from the Sheriff's Office IAPro database.
- To have a clear data set that was not ever-changing, OLEO assigned January 31, 2025 as the cutoff data date. That means that anything entered into IAPro after that date is not included in this Annual Report.
- In one investigation, OLEO judged the information to be erroneous and/or that an inaccurate disposition had been applied. The disposition recorded shows no finding when in fact it should have been sustained – lesser included[20] which is a new disposition published in February of 2025. For purposes of this Annual Report, OLEO did not change the no finding record but recognizes if sustained – lesser included had been used, OLEO would have included that allegation in analysis in this Annual Report.
- In investigations that resulted in a *Loudermill* hearing and where the *Loudermill* hearing outcome changed an allegation, disposition, or discipline, OLEO updated our dataset for analysis to show the new outcome from the *Loudermill* hearing. For example, a disposition was originally served as sustained and through a *Loudermill* hearing, the final disposition became non-sustained; OLEO used the final non-sustained disposition for analysis in this Annual Report.

[20] Sustained – lesser included is used when an allegation is supported by sufficient factual evidence to establish a general misconduct violation but is based on the same facts as a sustained serious misconduct allegation for the same incident, and therefore does not result in additional discipline. (GOM 3.03.190.)

Appendix B: Complaint Classifications

A complaint is classified into one of three ways: formal investigation, expedited investigation, or mediation.

1. **Formal investigation:** a complaint alleging a policy violation (serious or minor) that requires further investigation beyond the preliminary investigation or that does not fall under one of the other classifications.

2. **Expedited investigation:** a complaint that does not require further investigation beyond the preliminary investigation. An expedited investigation must fall under one of the following subcategories:
   - Preliminary evidence conclusive – a complaint where the preliminary investigation has provided clear and convincing evidence to determine that one of the below findings should be entered, and where there is no other compelling interest to further investigate:
     - Sustained, where the policy infraction warrants performance-related training but no other corrective action with the resulting disposition being performance-related training
     - Unfounded
     - Exonerated
   - Service or policy concern – a complaint that, even if true, would not be a violation of policy
   - Member stipulates to misconduct – a complaint that satisfies the following criteria:
     - Employee admits to the conduct alleged
     - Employee agrees to imposed corrective action
     - Allegation is not of a serious policy violation
     - Allegation does not involve an associated significant public concern
     - Employee does not attribute their actions to something that an investigator must independently verify
   - Lack of relevance – a complaint about a person who is no longer an employee of the Sheriff's Office, where the allegations are not of significant public concern, and where an administrative investigation would not provide meaningful information about current Sheriff's Office operations
   - Harassment and retaliation – a recurring complaint without additional facts and where there is evidence the complaint is made to harass or retaliate against an employee who themself filed a complaint
   - Referral to resources – a recurring complaint without additional facts or evidence and where there is cause to believe the complainant would benefit from a referral to community resources (e.g., mental health, substance use, crisis intervention)
   - Time limitation – a complaint that would not constitute a serious policy violation, that is not of significant public concern, and that is about conduct that occurred more than one year prior
   - Lack of evidence – a complaint where the preliminary investigation could not generate sufficient factual evidence or leads to allow for the identification of the involved employee

3. **Mediation:** a complaint that qualifies for mediation.

Appendix C: Notes about Allegations

For the purposes of this Annual Report, allegations have been described in a shortened fashion. Below are those allegations as shown in the GOM.[21] Because a given allegation may indicate a wide variety of specific misconduct reported, examples of this range are included.

Allegation, shortened	Allegation as shown in the GOM	Examples of allegations
Abuse of authority	Inappropriate use of authority	• A complainant alleges they were harassed by a deputy during a contact. • A complainant alleges deputies enforced a civil matter inappropriately.
Being under the influence while off duty resulting in charges	Being under the influence of either drugs or alcohol while off-duty, resulting in criminal conduct charges or conviction	• An off-duty deputy is alleged to have hit someone while intoxicated at a bar and is charged with assault.
Conduct unbecoming	Conduct unbecoming	• A complainant alleges a deputy contacted a sex worker for services while on-duty. • A complainant alleges a deputy swore at and threatened them. • An employee alleges their colleague made an inappropriate comment about them on social media.
Criminal conduct	Conduct that is criminal in nature	• An arrested person alleges they were sexually assaulted by a deputy. • A complainant alleges an employee stole their property. • A off-duty deputy is arrested on suspicion of DUI in Snohomish County.

[21] https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/sheriff/about-king-county/about-sheriff-office/about-kcso/general-orders-manual.

Notes about Allegations *continued*

Allegation, shortened	Allegation as shown in the GOM	Examples of allegations
Discourtesy	Courtesy/disrespect	• A complainant alleges the 911 dispatcher was dismissive. • A colleague reports a deputy making unprofessional comments about a coworker. • A complainant alleges they were harassed.
Discrimination	Discrimination, harassment, or retaliation[22]	• A complainant alleges a deputy was racially biased in handling a traffic matter. • An employee reports sexual harassment by a colleague.
Ethics and conflicts	Ethics, conflicts, and appearance of conflicts	• A colleague alleges an employee used their work email for political events.
Excessive force	Excessive use of force	• An arrested person alleges they were thrown to the ground unnecessarily by deputies. • A supervisor reports a deputy pointed a weapon improperly.
Fails to pass training	Fails to achieve a passing score in any required training or qualification session	• A deputy was late in renewing their firearm qualification. • An employee failed to complete a required anti- harassment training.
False statements	Making false or fraudulent reports or statements, committing acts of dishonesty, or inducing others to do so	• A complainant alleges a deputy lied about their body-worn camera. • An employee alleges their supervisor is lying about them.

[22] Previously, this allegation was listed in the GOM as Discrimination, harassment, incivility, and bigotry (members while on duty). The current allegation as shown in the table now separates out discrimination from inappropriate conduct which covers conduct that may not rise to discrimination but that nevertheless communicates a negative message based on a complainant's membership in a protected class.

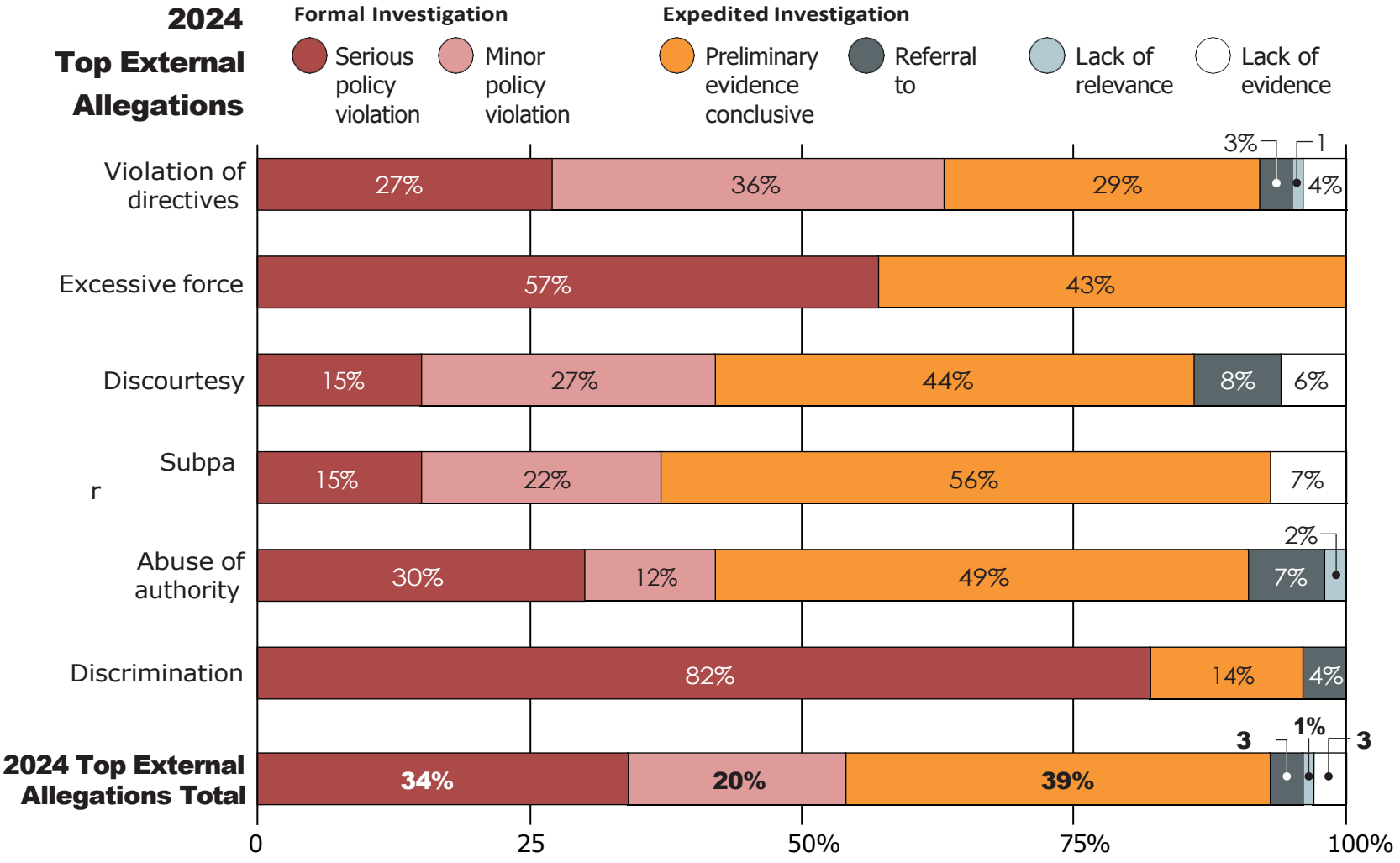
Notes about Allegations *continued*

Allegation, shortened	Allegation as shown in the GOM	Examples of allegations
Inappropriate conduct	Inappropriate conduct[23]	• An employee alleges a colleague made comments about their colleague's gender. • A complainant alleges a deputy harassed them.
Ridicule	Ridicule	• A complainant alleges deputies laughed at their report of an assault.
Subpar performance[24]	Performance standards: otherwise fails to meet standards set forth by law, policies or procedures as set out in this manual, or elsewhere; and Performance standards: performs at a level significantly below standards achieved by others in work unit	• An employee failed to work a mandatory overtime shift. • A complainant alleges a deputy failed to follow up and mishandled a case. • A colleague alleges a report has factual errors and inconsistencies. • A supervisor alleges a deputy modified equipment inappropriately.
Violation of directives	Acts in violation of Sheriff's Office directives, rules, policies, or procedures as set out in this manual, or elsewhere	• A colleague reports an employee was late for their shift. • A school zone camera takes a photo of a deputy speeding in their patrol car. • A complainant alleges they were arrested unlawfully without a warrant. • A supervisor alleges a deputy violated use of force and body-worn camera policy.

[23] Inappropriate conduct covers conduct that may not rise to discrimination but that nevertheless communicates a negative message based on a complainant's membership in a protected class.

[24] Previously, there were two versions of allegations of employees not meeting standards for performance: "Performs significantly below the standard achieved by others in the work unit" (often used) and "Otherwise fails to meet Sheriff's Office standards" (seldomly used). With the 2024 updates to the GOM, the wording of the latter was updated to "Otherwise fails to meet standards set forth by law, policy, procedure, or training", which IIU began using for all allegations of employees not meeting performance standards in place of the previous GOM categories. "Subpar performance" is comparable to the "Performs below standards" abbreviation in OLEO's 2023 Annual Report. This table in the appendix includes all related allegations as written in various GOM versions.

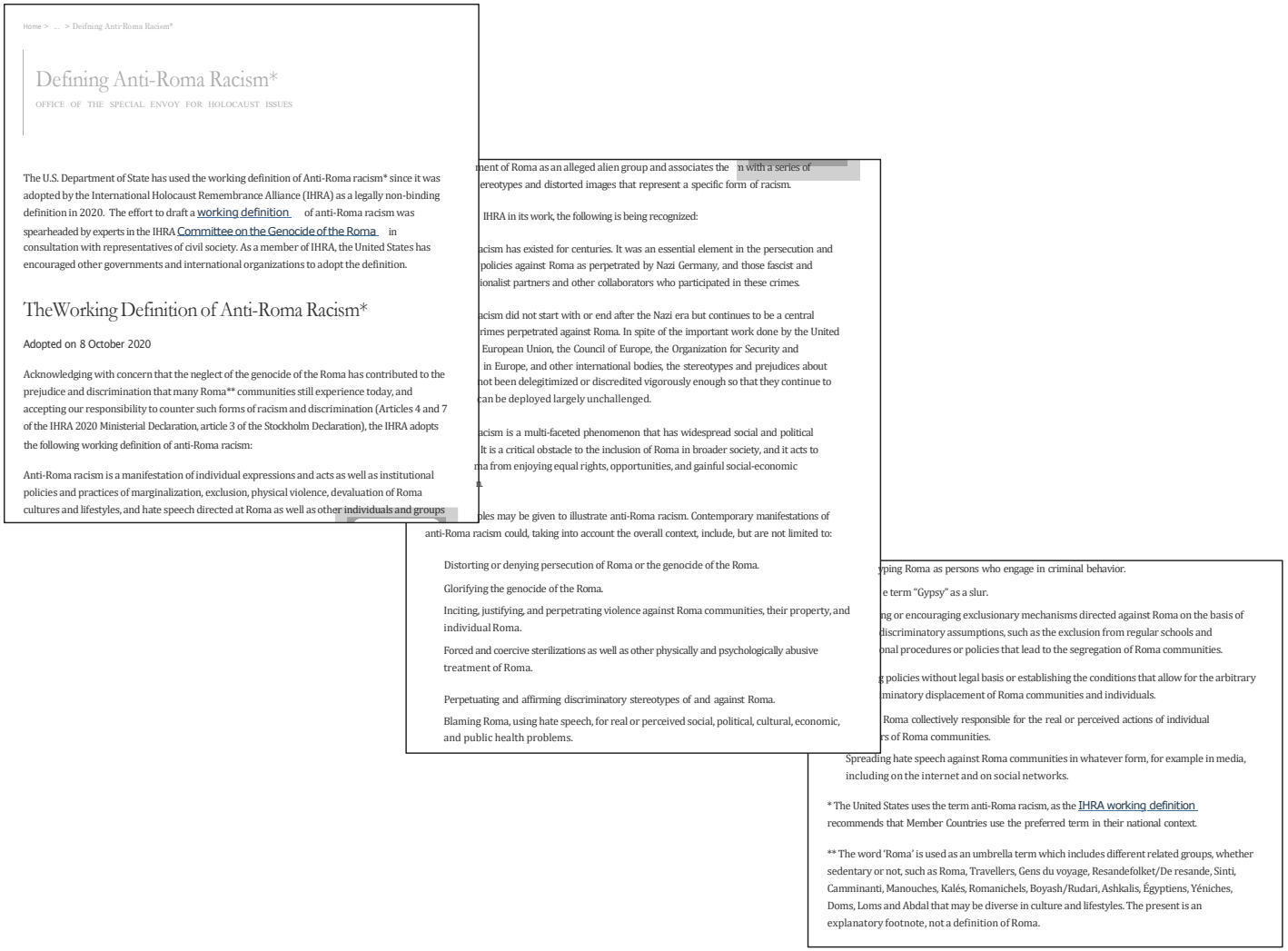
Appendix D: Top External Allegations by Classification Subcategory Type in 2024



Note: Percentages have been rounded, and mediation cases excluded..

Appendix E: Defining Anti-Roma Racism

As defined by the U.S. Department of State:[25]



Home > ... > Deifning Anti-Roma Racism*

Defining Anti-Roma Racism*

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ENVOY FOR HOLOCAUST ISSUES

The U.S. Department of State has used the working definition of Anti-Roma racism* since it was adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) as a legally non-binding definition in 2020. The effort to draft a working definition of anti-Roma racism was spearheaded by experts in the IHRA Committee on the Genocide of the Roma in consultation with representatives of civil society. As a member of IHRA, the United States has encouraged other governments and international organizations to adopt the definition.

TheWorking Definition of Anti-Roma Racism*

Adopted on 8 October 2020

Acknowledging with concern that the neglect of the genocide of the Roma has contributed to the prejudice and discrimination that many Roma** communities still experience today, and accepting our responsibility to counter such forms of racism and discrimination (Articles 4 and 7 of the IHRA 2020 Ministerial Declaration, article 3 of the Stockholm Declaration), the IHRA adopts the following working definition of anti-Roma racism:

Anti-Roma racism is a manifestation of individual expressions and acts as well as institutional policies and practices of marginalization, exclusion, physical violence, devaluation of Roma cultures and lifestyles, and hate speech directed at Roma as well as other individuals and groups

nment of Roma as an alleged alien group and associates the n with a series of ereotypes and distorted images that represent a specific form of racism.

IHRA in its work, the following is being recognized:

acism has existed for centuries. It was an essential element in the persecution and policies against Roma as perpetrated by Nazi Germany, and those fascist and ionalist partners and other collaborators who participated in these crimes.

acism did not start with or end after the Nazi era but continues to be a central rimes perpetrated against Roma. In spite of the important work done by the United European Union, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and in Europe, and other international bodies, the stereotypes and prejudices about not been delegitimized or discredited vigorously enough so that they continue to can be deployed largely unchallenged.

acism is a multi-faceted phenomenon that has widespread social and political It is a critical obstacle to the inclusion of Roma in broader society, and it acts to na from enjoying equal rights, opportunities, and gainful social-economic

ples may be given to illustrate anti-Roma racism. Contemporary manifestations of anti-Roma racism could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

Distorting or denying persecution of Roma or the genocide of the Roma.

Glorifying the genocide of the Roma.

Inciting, justifying, and perpetrating violence against Roma communities, their property, and individual Roma.

Forced and coercive sterilizations as well as other physically and psychologically abusive treatment of Roma.

Perpetuating and affirming discriminatory stereotypes of and against Roma.

Blaming Roma, using hate speech, for real or perceived social, political, cultural, economic, and public health problems.

yping Roma as persons who engage in criminal behavior.

e term "Gypsy" as a slur.

ng or encouraging exclusionary mechanisms directed against Roma on the basis of discriminatory assumptions, such as the exclusion from regular schools and onal procedures or policies that lead to the segregation of Roma communities.

g policies without legal basis or establishing the conditions that allow for the arbitrary minatory displacement of Roma communities and individuals.

Roma collectively responsible for the real or perceived actions of individual rs of Roma communities.

Spreading hate speech against Roma communities in whatever form, for example in media, including on the internet and on social networks.

* The United States uses the term anti-Roma racism, as the IHRA working definition recommends that Member Countries use the preferred term in their national context.

** The word 'Roma' is used as an umbrella term which includes different related groups, whether sedentary or not, such as Roma, Travellers, Gens du voyage, Resandefolket/De resande, Sinti, Camminanti, Manouches, Kalés, Romanichels, Boyash/Rudari, Ashkalis, Égyptiens, Yéniches, Doms, Loms and Abdal that may be diverse in culture and lifestyles. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma.

25 https://www.state.gov/defining-anti-roma-racism/.

Acknowledgments

OLEO would like to thank the following people for their contributions to this Annual Report:

Wendy Gable Collins, KCIT, for her delightful designs.

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And for their technical review and expertise:

- **King County Sheriff's Office**
- **Devon Shannon**, PAO
- **Sasha Alessi**, OLR

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King County

OLEO

OFFICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OVERSIGHT

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To request a print copy of this Annual Report, call or email OLEO.

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If you decide to receive notices and disclosures from us electronically, you may at any time change your mind and tell us that thereafter you want to receive required notices and disclosures only in paper format. How you must inform us of your decision to receive future notices and disclosure in paper format and withdraw your consent to receive notices and disclosures electronically is described below.

Consequences of changing your mind

If you elect to receive required notices and disclosures only in paper format, it will slow the speed at which we can complete certain steps in transactions with you and delivering services to you because we will need first to send the required notices or disclosures to you in paper format, and then wait until we receive back from you your acknowledgment of your receipt of such paper notices or disclosures. Further, you will no longer be able to use the DocuSign system to receive required notices and consents electronically from us or to sign electronically documents from us.

All notices and disclosures will be sent to you electronically

Unless you tell us otherwise in accordance with the procedures described herein, we will provide electronically to you through the DocuSign system all required notices, disclosures, authorizations, acknowledgements, and other documents that are required to be provided or made available to you during the course of our relationship with you. To reduce the chance of you inadvertently not receiving any notice or disclosure, we prefer to provide all of the required notices and disclosures to you by the same method and to the same address that you have given us. Thus, you can receive all the disclosures and notices electronically or in paper format through the paper mail delivery system. If you do not agree with this process, please let us know as described below. Please also see the paragraph immediately above that describes the consequences of your electing not to receive delivery of the notices and disclosures electronically from us.

How to contact King County-Department of 02:

You may contact us to let us know of your changes as to how we may contact you electronically, to request paper copies of certain information from us, and to withdraw your prior consent to receive notices and disclosures electronically as follows:
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To let us know of a change in your email address where we should send notices and disclosures electronically to you, you must send an email message to us at cipriano.dacanay@kingcounty.gov and in the body of such request you must state: your previous email address, your new email address. We do not require any other information from you to change your email address.

If you created a DocuSign account, you may update it with your new email address through your account preferences.

To request paper copies from King County-Department of 02

To request delivery from us of paper copies of the notices and disclosures previously provided by us to you electronically, you must send us an email to cipriano.dacanay@kingcounty.gov and in the body of such request you must state your email address, full name, mailing address, and telephone number. We will bill you for any fees at that time, if any.

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To confirm to us that you can access this information electronically, which will be similar to other electronic notices and disclosures that we will provide to you, please confirm that you have read this ERSD, and (i) that you are able to print on paper or electronically save this ERSD for your future reference and access; or (ii) that you are able to email this ERSD to an email address where you will be able to print on paper or save it for your future reference and access. Further, if you consent to receiving notices and disclosures exclusively in electronic format as described herein, then select the check-box next to 'I agree to use electronic records and signatures' before clicking 'CONTINUE' within the DocuSign system.

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- Until or unless you notify King County-Department of 02 as described above, you consent to receive exclusively through electronic means all notices, disclosures, authorizations, acknowledgements, and other documents that are required to be provided or made available to you by King County-Department of 02 during the course of your relationship with King County-Department of 02.