



City of Baltimore Community Oversight Task Force Guide 2017

OVERVIEW

As part of the Settlement Agreement between the Department of Justice and the Baltimore Police Department and City of Baltimore, the City is required to establish a Community Oversight Task Force (COTF) to recommend reforms to the current system of civilian oversight. The appointed members, appointed by the Mayor, must be Baltimore City residents and representative of the diverse communities of Baltimore.

MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Review the functions of the Civilian Review Board (“CRB”), and whether there are impediments to BPD civilian complaint processes that inhibit the ability of the Baltimore community to seek accountability for police misconduct.
- Review how the civilian oversight system currently functions, how it should function, and what the impediments to change are, and will then make recommendations based on that information. The assessment will consider civilian oversight models and promising practices in place in other cities throughout the nation.
- The assessment will make recommendations to improve civilian and community oversight of BPD, which will include the following areas:
 - a. Whether changes should be made to the CRB to improve its efficacy, including, but not limited to, changes to complaint intake, investigations, resources, coordination with and independence from BPD, and authority to recommend discipline; the assessment should specify whether any recommended changes require state legislative action;
 - b. Whether there are impediments to BPD’s civilian complaint processes that inhibit the ability of the Baltimore community to obtain accountability for misconduct;
 - c. Whether the community has sufficient access to information about CRB’s organization, complaint investigation activities, and discipline recommendation processes to promote public confidence in the CRB and ensure that it serves its function to enable BPD to be responsive to community values, and whether any recommended access would require state legislative action;
 - d. Whether existing civilian-police communication and accountability structures can be improved, or whether additional or different civilian or community oversight entities are necessary to:
 - i. provide effective guidance on community perspectives on BPD policies, procedures, and practices;

- ii. oversee BPD's accountability systems and disseminate information to the public about BPD's activities in readily accessible format; and
 - iii. foster a stronger relationship between BPD and the communities it serves;
- e. Whether changes should be made to BPD's community policing strategies to increase cooperation between BPD and the communities it serves.

MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

Service on the community oversight task force is an important community service that will require participants to attend at least ten (10) hours a month for eleven (11) consecutive months. Additionally, there are orientation and training sessions that members must attend, including ride-alongs with police officers. Candidates should also:

- Demonstrate ability to be impartial and objective;
- Demonstrate commitment to serving Baltimore communities;
- Demonstrate interest and/or involvement in issues concerning civilian oversight;
- Possess sound communication and listening skills;
- Lead and function well in a group;
- Maintain high standards of confidentiality; and
- Be willing to make a substantial time commitment—including trainings, monthly evening meetings, workgroup meetings, community meetings and independent review of relevant documents.