



Good Morning Madame Chairman Dowell, Vice Chair Silverstein and members of the City Council. I am Sydney Roberts, the Chief Administrator for the Civilian Office of Police Accountability or COPA. Before I begin, I would like to introduce my staff:

Sitting with me are Chief of Staff Karlo Flowers, General Counsel Kevin Connor, and Public Information Officer, Ephraim Eaddy.

I am also joined by senior staff members in the box, including:

- Deputy Chief Investigator, Angela Hearts-Glass;
- Deputy Chief Investigator, Jay Westensee;
- Director of Administrative Services, Michael Allen;
- Director of Information Services, Adam Pondexter;
- Director of Public Affairs, Jennifer Rottner; and
- Director of Public Policy & Legislative Affairs, Gilbert Jimenez

It's our privilege to be here today to present COPA's 2020 budget proposal. I realize as I sit before you that it's been three years since the City Council passed the ordinance establishing COPA as the civilian oversight agency of the Chicago Police Department and just over two years since we began operations. It's an honor for us to serve in this capacity and while we've made significant progress and learned important lessons over our brief existence, we continue to mature and improve as an agency.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to thorough, objective, integrity-based investigations, reaching findings and making recommendations based on comprehensive

and unbiased review of the evidence available in each individual case. We've also recommended improvements in Department operations as we work with law enforcement and community groups and members to build trust in civilian police oversight.

In 2020, COPA will build on these efforts while we continue to develop and improve our investigative processes and capacity while maintaining the objectivity of our recommendations. We'll also continue to engage and obtain essential feedback from community and Department members and provide the highest quality service to all stakeholders based on our 3 main priorities:

**Priority 1: Enhancing Case Closure Capacity**

During the past year, despite the steady increase in complaint volume, COPA closed more investigations in a timely manner than in previous years. At last year's budget hearing, I pledged to you that COPA would mount a concerted effort to close all investigations it inherited in September 2017. COPA inherited nearly 950 open cases - several of which are Officer Involved Shootings, that were more than 5 years old. By the conclusion of Q3, we closed more than 850 such legacy cases. Less than 10% of those cases remain open.

**Priority 2: Consent Decree Compliance**

In early 2019, COPA evaluated its operations and practices in light of Consent Decree requirements. We created a strategic plan to meet each Consent Decree mandate and benchmark. During 2019, we've revised or created and implemented numerous policies to meet Consent Decree requirements. Given COPA's thorough preparation and close

cooperation with the monitoring team, we've experienced no significant impediments to full compliance.

**Priority 3: Introducing an Inclusive Community - Based Mediation Program**

In the coming year, COPA will continue its work to introduce a community-based mediation program. We are currently working with other public and private partners to help us launch a process that goes even beyond Consent Decree requirements. COPA's Program will include meaningful community input and embrace restorative justice principles to address strains within our communities as well as conflicts between officers and individual complainants. This program is a key priority. We intend it to be a catalyst for building trust between our communities and the Department.

In closing, when preparing this budget, we were mindful of our obligations to all stakeholders, whether members of our communities or members of the Department to be unbiased and transparent in delivering services and to be thoughtful and patient in our efforts to build stakeholder trust.

As I stated in my address to the City Council last year, it is my goal and the goal of all COPA staff to move our City closer to a civilian police oversight system that earns the trust and meets the needs of all Chicagoans, civilian and sworn.

We thank you for your time and support and welcome your comments and questions.