

ANNUAL REVIEW 2024

THE PROVIDENCE EXTERNAL REVIEW AUTHORITY



FEBRUARY 10, 2025

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ANNUAL OVERVIEW

In 2024, the Providence External Review Authority (PERA) continued to expand its oversight and community engagement efforts. As the only civilian police oversight body in Rhode Island, PERA faced significant challenges in accessing police records but made progress in increasing transparency, fostering community trust, and advocating for structural changes that enhance accountability within the Providence Police Department (PPD).

Key milestones in 2024 included the successful implementation of an electronic case management system, the completion of the first independent audit of the police department's gang database, and expanded community outreach programs. PERA also remained engaged with policymakers to push for critical amendments to its enabling ordinance, ensuring greater access to police records and strengthening oversight mechanisms.

POLICY & OVERSIGHT PROGRESS

PERA reviewed several key police policies and procedures in 2024 and submitted recommendations to the Mayor's Office and the Chief of Police, copies of the policies were also submitted to the City Council President. These included:

- The 360.08 Eyewitness Identification Policy - Revised to align with national best practices. [First review on 01-11-24, Second Review 02-08-24, Final Review on 03-14-24].
- 130.03 Disciplinary System - Reviewed and updated for clarity and consistency. [First review on 05-01-24, Final review on 06-13-24].
- 130.04 Early Warning System - Strengthened to identify patterns of officer misconduct. [First review on 05-01-24. Final review on 06-13-24].
- 360.10 Intelligence Assessment Database - Review completed and recommendations submitted. [First review on 09-06-24, third review on 11-18-24, Final Review 01-09-25].

In 2023, PERA reviewed and submitted three policies for recommendations to the Mayor's office, to the Chief of Police, and copied to the City Council President. PERA did not receive a response from the PPD from any of the three recommendations submitted to the Providence Police.

PERA's efforts led to increased scrutiny of police policies and their impact on community relations. Additionally, PERA successfully spearheaded the first independent audit of the gang list database maintained by the police department as mandated by the Police Community Relations Ordinance 18 ½ -4. The audit revealed recordkeeping deficiencies, prompting necessary reforms within the department that will be reviewed annually for compliance.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

PERA significantly expanded community engagement in 2024 through partnerships and educational programs. Key initiatives included:

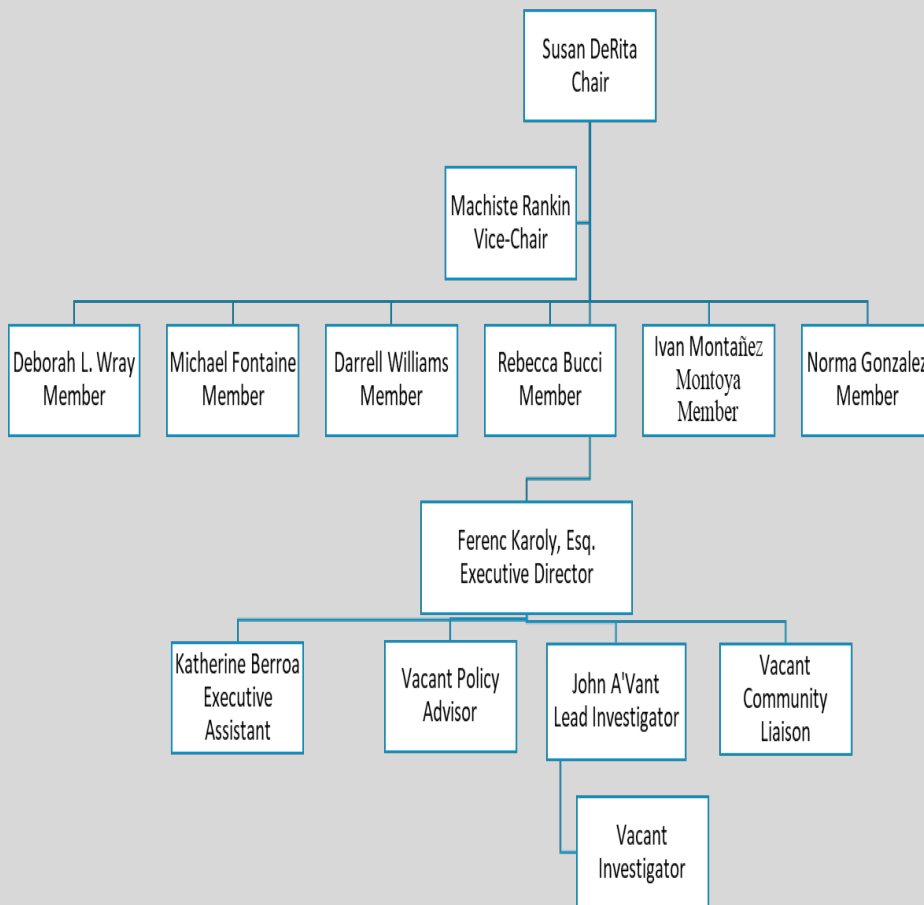
Educational Programs:

- Conducted training at Rhode Island College on First and Fourth Amendment rights, police interactions, and the Community Police Relations Act.
- Invitations were submitted to all City Council members to have PERA present at their ward meetings. Six City Council members accepted the invitation, and PERA was able to present and extend our mission to the community in those specific wards.
- Presented at community meetings, Rhode Island College (RIC), and the RI Commission on Prejudice & Bias.
- PERA has given multiple presentations on constitutional policing, the complaint process, and civil rights to local colleges in Providence, including Rhode Island College (RIC) and Johnson & Wales University (JWU), and is scheduled to do more presentations in the following months.
- Hosted a training on the principles of effective police oversight, presented by the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) for the public and city council.

PUBLIC ACCESS & TRANSPARENCY

- Launched a case management system with a public portal for tracking complaints and auditing investigations.
- Public Portal allows for easy filing of complaints, compliments, policy review requests, and police IA investigations review.
- The new case management system allows users to easily upload and track documents or video files with their submissions.
- Public portal gives real-time public access to case data as it is collected and reviewed.
- Improved PERA's website to offer real-time updates on cases and access to training materials.

The Providence External Review Authority Organizational Chart



COMPLAINTS & INVESTIGATIONS

In 2024, PERA received 18 formal complaints from community members regarding police conduct. These complaints included allegations of illegal arrests, excessive force, harassment, and inappropriate conduct.

Please note: Complaints can contain multiple allegations.

COMPLAINT TYPE	#	DISMISSED	REFERRED FOR FULL INVESTIGATION	PENDING OPR COMPLETION
Disagrees with Police Action	1	1	0	0
Discourtesy	3	2	1	0
Harassment	2	1	0	0
Illegal Arrest/Excessive Force	4	2	1	1
Illegal Search/Seizure	5	1	3	1
Inappropriate Conduct/Other	6	6	0	0
REASONS FOR DISMISSAL				
No Probable Cause				3
Unfounded				3
No Jurisdiction/ Not reviewable				6
Untimely				0
Insufficient Data				1

FINDINGS:

Cases Pending Internal Police Review (OPR): Several complaints remain under review by the PPD’s Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) before PERA can conduct further investigation.

Full Investigations by PERA: Four cases were referred for full PERA investigation due to concerns over the fairness of the internal police review process and are pending evidentiary hearings before the board.

2024 BUDGET OVERVIEW

From the period covering **January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024**, PERA's expenditures totaled \$138,195, broken down into the following categories:

	FY24 BUDGET	FY24 ACTUALS		
	FY2024	FY2024	Over / (Under) Budget \$	Over / (Under) Budget %
Expenditures				
50010 - Salaries	\$447,963	\$160,297	(\$287,666)	(64%)
50080 - Sick Leave	\$0	\$3,364	\$3,364	-
50090 - Vacation	\$0	\$4,564	\$4,564	-
50340 - Holiday	\$0	\$8,926	\$8,926	-
50350 - Longevity	-	\$2,408	\$2,408	-
SALARIES TOTAL	\$447,963	\$179,558	(\$268,405)	(60%)
51570 - Dental Insurance	\$1,520	\$947	(\$573)	(38%)
51573 - EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	-	\$13	\$13	-
51820 - Laborers Int'L Pension	-	\$350	\$350	-
51850 - City Of Providence Pension Expense	\$16,779	\$56,143	\$39,364	235%
51980 - F.I.C.A.	\$33,747	\$13,417	(\$20,330)	(60%)
51999 - Local 1033 Benefits Expense	-	\$269	\$269	-
59891 - Transfer To Active Medical Ins Fund	\$11,583	\$21,351	\$9,768	84%
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS TOTAL	\$63,629	\$92,491	\$28,862	45%
52170 - Postage	\$1,800	\$19	(\$1,781)	(99%)
52175 - Advertising/Marketing	\$27,000	-	(\$27,000)	(100%)
52185 - Dues & Subscriptions	\$1,080	\$500	(\$580)	(54%)
52210 - Printing	\$9,000	\$1,115	(\$7,885)	(88%)
53401 - Private Contractors	\$72,000	\$15,500	(\$56,500)	(78%)
52700 - Professional Development	\$22,500	\$3,381	(\$19,119)	(85%)
SERVICES TOTAL	\$133,380	\$20,515	(\$112,865)	(85%)
54000 - Office Supplies	\$4,500	\$3,499	(\$1,001)	(22%)

54020 - Stationery	\$1,800	\$493	(\$1,307)	(73%)
53500 - Misc. Expenses	\$18,000	\$1,947	(\$16,053)	(89%)
53000 - Rental Of Land And Buildings	\$45,120	\$43,260	(\$1,860)	(4%)
52913 - Copiers Lease And Maintenance	\$2,250	\$2,058	(\$192)	(9%)
SUPPLIES TOTAL	\$71,670	\$51,257	(\$20,413)	(28%)
EXPENSES TOTAL	\$716,642	\$343,821	(\$372,821)	(52%)
EXPENDITURES TOTAL	\$716,642	\$343,821	(\$372,821)	(52%)

CHALLENGES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Challenges:

1. **Limited Access to Police Records:** PERA continues to experience delays in receiving case files, body-worn camera footage, and other critical documents.
2. **Delays in Implementing Policy Changes:** Proposed ordinance amendments granting PERA direct access to records have yet to be acted upon by the City Council.
3. **Community Awareness and Engagement:** Although outreach efforts have improved, there remains a gap in public knowledge about PERA's role and resources.
4. **Lack of Response to Policy Recommendations:** To date, there has not been a response from the police department or the administration acknowledging PERA's policy recommendations nor explaining whether they have been implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **City Council Action:** PERA urges the City Council to move forward with the ordinance amendment to ensure direct access to police records.
2. **Increased Public Education Initiatives:** Expand community training sessions and work with schools, neighborhood associations, and advocacy groups.
3. **Enhance Budget Utilization:** Address administrative hurdles delaying training programs, external audits, and mediation initiatives.

CONCLUSION

In 2024, PERA made significant strides in improving police accountability, public transparency, and community engagement. However, key structural challenges remain, particularly in securing direct access to police records and advancing policy recommendations.

PERA remains committed to its mission, ensuring fair, impartial, and effective oversight of the Providence Police Department. We look forward to continued collaboration with community leaders, elected officials, and law enforcement to build a transparent and accountable policing system.

