



Quarterly Report – Q2 2020

Systemic change is needed

The second quarter of 2020 placed a spotlight on the criminal justice system and its harmful policies, practices, and shortcomings. The murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer, combined with numerous killings of Black people by police that came both before and after, exposed previously unaware community members to the inequities built into the system and galvanized an already passionate, vocal population into taking sustained action. More people are recognizing that systemic racism is ingrained in the way our policing system was created and has impact regardless of the motivation of individual leaders and officers.

The Independent Police Review has worked for years to gain enough authority to sufficiently address cases that speak to systemic racism. Statutory constraints, such as the state law that prohibits non-criminal justice agencies from accessing certain criminal justice related data, limit the ability of an oversight body to be truly effective and transparent. Without direct access, investigators must request reports from the Police Bureau and analysts must make complex requests of the Bureau for data that could be used to analyze the bigger picture.

There are also restrictions at the state level and within the Bureau's labor agreement that limit what can be shared with the public. State law exempts police disciplinary records from disclosure unless public interest requires it. In addition to state law, labor contract provisions mandate that all imposed discipline be done in a manner "least likely to embarrass the officer." These two constraints mean few cases are ever made public, and when they are it creates the opportunity for an arbitrator to overturn the decision if they conclude the disclosure violated the labor contract.

The Independent Police Review has been pushing for improvements to police accountability since our creation in 2001. We recognize the need for greater police oversight and aim to share our ongoing work towards that end. The best way to make a better police system is to make our work as transparent as possible and work with the community to make the current process more robust. However, police oversight in Portland needs the support of its leaders, policy makers, and the community to better address the barriers to full transparency, independence, and authority necessary for any oversight system to flourish.



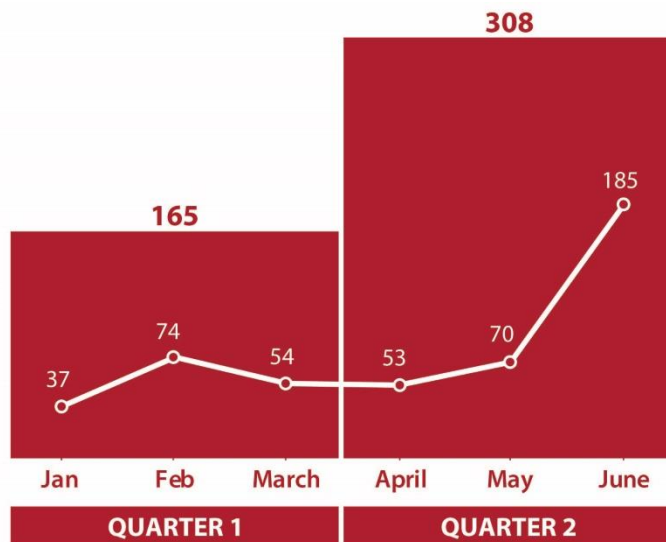
We encourage community members to read the [statement](#) published by the Citizen Review Committee and consider engaging in the accountability process; some methods for engagement are described.

Community contacts and intake investigations increase

Community members can contact IPR over the phone, email, through the mail, or with our [online form](#). Investigators review all contacts received and enter them into a case management system.

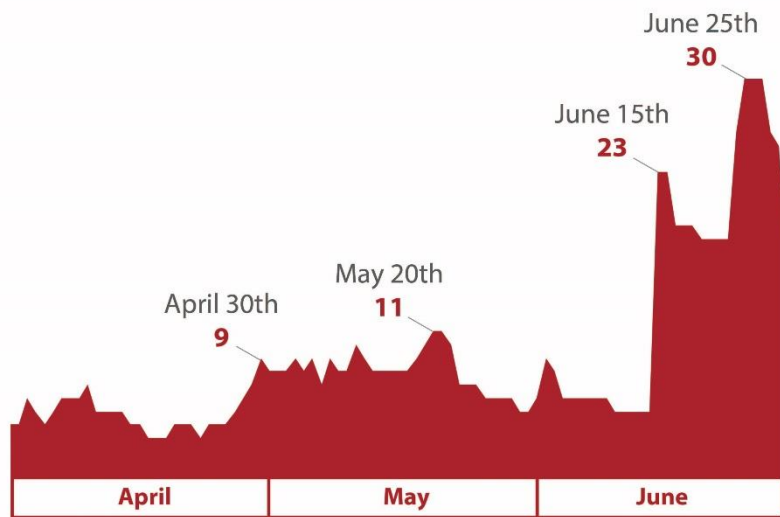
These contacts leaped above the typical amount in June to 185 – more than double any of the previous months in Q1 or Q2. The influx of contacts in June led to a total of 308 total community contacts in the second quarter of 2020, compared to 165 during Q1. Of the 308 contacts received in Q2, at least 113 were directly related to protest activity.

Community contacts rise during protests





Intake investigation workload increases at the end of Q2



Community contacts that allege misconduct are opened as intake investigations to gather more facts and determine the best way to handle the complaint. Investigators have 14 days to gather evidence, request and review reports, interview witnesses, and write a report on their findings.

Similar to the jump in community contacts, the number of intake investigations being conducted each day leaped from an average of 6.3 for most of the quarter to 22.5 in the second half of June.

What to expect if you file a complaint

If you file a complaint with IPR using the online form, email, or a mail-in form, an investigator will try to reach you using the contact information you provide to gather more evidence about the incident and ask follow-up questions. If you make your original complaint over the phone, an investigator will ask you thorough questions about the incident at that time but may contact you again with follow-up questions.

The current protests have resulted in many complaints submitted by what we call “third parties.” These complaints are usually from people who saw a video, news story, or heard from an acquaintance about an incident involving the police. We keep a record of all these complaints, but it is generally difficult to proceed with no contact information for anyone involved in the incident. If you submit a complaint on behalf of someone else or because of something you witnessed but were not a part of, please encourage the involved parties to talk with an investigator so we can thoroughly investigate the incident. Third party



complainants will receive a delayed response as we work to timely respond to parties directly involved in incidents.

Outreach and education on police accountability continue

Given the increased interest in police accountability, IPR stepped up its campaign to educate the community about what we do. Publications and news stories from the second quarter include:

- A [policy review](#) of the Bureau's Transit Division that makes recommendations for improving accountability and consistent enforcement,
- A [one-page flier](#) that summarizes IPR's history and what we do, and
- Interviews of [IPR Director Ross Caldwell](#) and [City Auditor Mary Hull Caballero](#) by OPB's Think Out Loud radio program that explain what we do and define some challenges to effective police oversight in Portland.