

Frequently Asked Questions: Community Oversight Advisory Board

The United States Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) have entered into a Settlement Agreement to improve the policies, training and analysis of key functions of the Portland Police. Both parties realize there is significant community and City interest in improving relationships between the Portland Police and community members. The Agreement ensures community oversight of the implementation and results of the Agreement With the creation of the Community Oversight Advisory Board (COAB). The 20-member COAB will review and assist with the implementation of this agreement and address how to improve the Portland Police Bureau's current community outreach efforts. The intent of the COAB is to work toward community confidence in PPB and facilitate police/community relationships necessary to promote public safety for all Portlanders.

Frequent Questions

Q. What will the COAB do?

The COAB members will assess from a community-based perspective whether or not the Police Bureau and the City of Portland are meeting the terms of the City's Agreement with the DOJ. They will do this through reviewing data and reports related to the agreement, by presenting the City's reports on implementation to the public and receiving community feedback, and by asking questions of the Advisory members and invited expert guests. The COAB will make recommendations to a Compliance Officer/Community Liaison (COCL) on whether the terms of the Agreement are being met. The COCL will chair the COAB meetings and administer the functions of the COAB.

Q. What is the COAB authorized to do as it pertains to the Settlement Agreement?

- A.** The COAB will independently assess the implementation of the Agreement; make recommendations to the Portland Police, DOJ and the Community Officer and Community Liaison on additional actions; advise the Chief of Police and Police Commissioner on strategies to improve community relations; provide the community with information on the Agreement and implementation; contribute to the development and implementation of a PPB Community Engagement and Outreach Plan (CEO Plan); and receive public comments and concerns.

Q. What is the Community Engagement and Outreach Plan (CEO)?

- A.** Both the DOJ and the City of Portland realize that there is significant community and City interest in improving relationships between the Portland Police and community members. The Agreement requires that the Police Bureau work with community partners and the COAB to develop and implement a new Community Engagement and Outreach (CEO) Plan. The goals of the plan should include strategies to more closely interact with the community to resolve neighborhood problems and increase community confidence in the

Police. After surveying community members and gleaned strategies from existing outreach efforts, PPB will work with City resources knowledgeable about public outreach processes as well as community members and the COAB to develop and finalize a CEO Plan. The Chief of Police must finalize a CEO Plan that the COAB will vote on for approval.

Q. Who will be on the COAB?

- A. The COAB will be comprised of 20 members. Five members will be Portland Police Bureau employees and will be advisory only. Fifteen members will be civilian community members who are not city employees and will be voting members. The voting members are all independent of the City of Portland.

The fifteen voting members will include members selected through three different processes. 1. Five members will be appointed by each of the five members of Portland City Council. 2. The Chairs of the Portland Human Rights Commission and the Portland Commission on Disabilities will each designate one person from each of those committees and will jointly select three community members to serve as representatives of the mental health community on the COAB, after soliciting and reviewing applications from the public. 3. The community-at-large will select five members directly from the community through a yet-to-be-established voting process.

Q. Who can apply for the COAB?

- A. There are two opportunities to apply for COAB membership. If you are someone who represents the mental health community, you will have the opportunity to submit your interest to the chairs of the Human Rights Commission and the Commission on Disabilities while they consider their three appointments to the COAB. You can also participate in the selection process for those members chosen by the community-at-large. While COAB membership must come from a broad spectrum of the community, the Agreement requires that COAB members must live, work, worship, or attend school in the City of Portland. COAB members shall not have an actual or perceived conflict of interest with the City of Portland.

Q. Is there a process to apply for the COAB?

- A. The Human Rights Commission and the Disability Commission have not yet determined how they will select the three members who will represent the mental health community. This information will be posted and widely distributed once it is determined.

For the community-at-large positions, each neighborhood coalition or any non-profit organization within the City of Portland may nominate one candidate. Additionally, any person who resides in Portland (over the age of 15) may be considered provided they are able to submit fifty names of Portland residents that support their nomination.

Q. What is the process for being selected to the COAB?

- A. The City will hold public meetings for community members to engage in the selection process for the five community-at-large positions on the COAB. At these meetings, candidates will be given an opportunity to speak and ask for support from the community members who are attending the meetings. Candidates will be required to indicate whether they live, work, worship, and/or go to school in Portland at this time. Attendees at this meeting will then vote as to their preference.

If there are ten or fewer candidates, the attendees will select the top five candidates receiving the most votes. If there are more than ten candidates, a preliminary vote will be taken and the top ten candidates receiving the most votes will be selected. A second vote will then decide the five members to serve on the COAB. The next two candidates who receive the most votes will be identified as alternates in the event a COAB member is removed or incapacitated.

Q. Could the selection process change?

- A. Yes, because it is unknown how many community members will be interested, this process could change. The City may adopt other procedures necessary to ensure that the selection of the five “at-large” community members for the COAB is effective.

Q. How will the other ten citizen members be selected?

- A. Each City Council member will select one member each. The Chair of the Human Rights Commission will select one Human Rights Commissioner; The Chair of the Portland Commission on Disability will select one Commissioner on Disability; Both the Human Rights Commission and the Portland Commission on Disability will jointly choose the remaining three members.

Q. What are the qualifications that someone has to have to be considered?

- A. COAB members must live, work, worship or attend school in the City of Portland. Members must be at least 15 years of age. COAB members must be objective, reasonable, knowledgeable in analysis and have good communication skills.

Q. What is the time commitment?

- A. Members will be required to serve on the COAB for a minimum two year term. At the end of two years members can be reappointed for an additional year. While it is yet to be determined how often the COAB will meet, the COAB will be required to hold two public meetings within 90 days of the board being formed to hear input from the community. In addition, the COCL who will chair the COAB, is required to convene the COAB quarterly to present reports on implementation. The COAB is additionally required to convene twice per year with the command staff of PPB. The COCL, in consultation with the COAB, may choose to have these meetings be one and the same.

We expect that the COAB will meet ten to fifteen times per year for 2-3 hours and that COAB members will spend a significant amount of time outside of these meetings reviewing materials.

Q. What kind of training will be involved?

- A.** COAB members will be required to take a one day citizen's academy training put on by the Portland Police Bureau to learn about the duties and responsibilities of Portland Police officers. This introductory class will give participants basic knowledge of the type of training police officers go through and will assist with future analysis during the implementation process. The City Attorney's Office will also provide the COAB with training on the provisions of the agreement and the COAB's role. Further training may be provided by the City on an as-needed basis.