



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 5, 2022

**CONTACT**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT LAUNCHES COMMUNITY-POLICE MEDIATION PILOT TO ADDRESS SELECT POLICE MISCONDUCT COMPLAINTS**

*The program would allow some COPA and BIA complaints to be referred to a community mediation program*

**CHICAGO** — Today, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Police Department (CPD) launched a pilot program with the Center for Conflict Resolution (CCR) to provide mediation of select police misconduct complaints filed with the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) and the CPD Bureau of Internal Affairs (BIA). The pilot program, which provides an alternative to the traditional complaint investigation, is the outcome of engagement with Chicago residents, community leaders, police officers, and stakeholders. The pilot will run until the end of March 2023.

"With this community-based mediation program in place, we will be able to better foster a supportive and trustworthy environment for people to not only report police misconduct complaints but have their voices heard and believed," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Furthermore, we hope this program will improve the standard for resolving misconduct complaints and move us one step closer toward compliance with the federal Consent Decree requirements."

Guided by research and analysis gathered from public forums, surveys, focus groups, social media platforms, and other community engagement efforts, the City and CCR developed a mediation model that will be used to address select complaints with the intention of finding a resolution in a more expedited manner. The types of complaints to be mediated will include allegations related to perceived bias in policing, failure to provide appropriate service, unnecessary physical conduct, and unprofessionalism. COPA will screen eligible complaints, notify the parties when their case is eligible for mediation, refer them to CCR for mediation, and close cases upon successful mediation. The pilot mediation model will be conducted with specific outcomes in mind, including efficiency, transparency, procedural justice, and restorative justice — and will incorporate continuous opportunities for community involvement.

"The Chicago Police Department is always working to build and strengthen trust with the communities we serve," said Superintendent David O. Brown. "This mediation



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

---



program is another opportunity to foster communication and hear from our community members."

"As the agency responsible for receiving public complaints alleging police misconduct, COPA fully supports this effort by the City that will not only bring quick resolution but also builds bridges in community and police relations, which contributes to public safety," said COPA Chief Andrea Kersten. "With the addition of the mediation pilot, Chicago continues its reform efforts and adds another tool to our toolbox for productive conflict resolution."

The 2019 Consent Decree, which both the State of Illinois and City of Chicago have entered into, requires the City to undertake certain reforms including developing a program for community mediation of complaints. The City's work over the last year to move in a deliberate and community-informed manner has opened the door to this collaboration.

"Mediation plays two critical roles," said Deputy Mayor for Public Safety Elena Gottreich. "From a legal perspective, it gives the parties the opportunity to resolve disputes in a less confrontational manner. Through this process, the second role of mediation serves to foster compassion and empathy between the parties as they work together to create equitable solutions. The addition of mediation to the world of police accountability is an exciting one, and we are grateful to CCR for this opportunity."

CCR, whom the City will be working with to administer the program, has provided free mediation services to Cook County residents for more than 40 years, serving 4,500 clients and mediating over 1,500 cases a year. CCR uses a corps of 180 trained volunteer mediators to provide conflict resolution services using a facilitative model. Mediators participate in a 40-hour basic skills training followed by a 3-month mentorship program and skills-based assessment before being certified to mediate cases. Once mediators are certified, they are peer-reviewed semi-annually to assess performance. Under CCR's facilitative model, mediators do not provide advice or opinion but create an opportunity for parties to have productive conversations about the incident that brought them to mediation with an eye toward realistic resolutions.

Cassie Lively, CCR Executive Director, notes, "Community-police mediation programs across the country have demonstrated the potential for one-on-one dialogue to transform perceptions for both civilians and officers and to create connections that repair harm and build trust. Chicago's program will be a model for other jurisdictions looking at creating similar initiatives."



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



This community mediation pilot program, which began on October 1, 2022, will review select categories of complaints to assess and evaluate how to implement a police-community mediation program on a larger scale. After the pilot closes on March 31, 2023, evaluations will be compiled and reviewed. Officers, community members, and other stakeholders will be engaged to share their feedback on the program.

###