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The Civilian Complaint Review Board Releases 2016 Annual Report
*Record High Concurrence and Substantiation Rates, Growing Presence of Video Evidence
and Increasingly Efficient Investigations*

New York, NY - Today, the NYC Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) released its 2016 Annual Report. The report notes a decline of complaints received within the Agency's jurisdiction. It also highlights four important findings: 1) the rate of agreement between the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and the CCRB on officer discipline is at a record high; 2) a continued rise in the rate of substantiations; 3) dramatic growth in the amount of video evidence collected by the CCRB; and 4) remarkable progress in shortening the time it takes to complete a full investigation.

"Civilian oversight of police misconduct has always been important to achieve safe and fair policing. Over the last year that has continued to be the case. As one of the oldest and largest civilian police oversight agencies we are acutely aware that as the nation debates police reform with growing urgency, we continue to work, Board and staff, to improve what we do and how we do it," said CCRB Chair Maya D. Wiley, Esq. "The 2016 Annual Report reflects the Agency's growth—from continuing to implement efficiencies in investigations, to cultivating stronger relationships with community members, to streamlining processes that will yield long-term benefits for how we serve the people of New York City. I believe deeply in the continuing possibilities of building on these steps to move the needle on policing that supports both civilian and officer safety and improves public confidence in the City's ability to address incidents of officer misconduct."

In 2016 the concurrence rate—the rate of agreement between the Police Commissioner and CCRB about the need for discipline—reached a record high of 83 percent. "This is the highest concurrence rate in the Agency's history, and it reflects both the effectiveness of the CCRB's advocacy and the Police Commissioner's commitment to holding officers accountable for their misconduct," said CCRB Chair Maya D. Wiley, Esq. "That said, we must continue our conversations with the Department to bridge the gap in the cases where we are not completely in agreement—as seen in the 20 percent of cases where the Police Commissioner downgraded CCRB's discipline recommendation, and the additional 17 percent of cases where the Department issued no discipline at all."

Because of CCRB’s thorough and impartial investigations, the rate of substantiated cases—the percentage of cases where the Board substantiated at least one allegation—continues to rise: 23 percent in 2016, up from 8 percent in 2011. Indeed, the 2016 Annual Report marks a rise in all “on the merit” dispositions—substantiated, unfounded and exonerated—since 2011, reflecting the continuing effectiveness of investigators that aids the Board in issuing fair and definitive dispositions in complaints.

Furthermore, as an indicator of the Investigations Divisions’ performance, the length of time it takes to conduct a complete investigation has been on a steady decline: 224 days in 2015 compared to just 140 days in 2016.

The expanded NYPD Body-Worn Camera pilot program in 2016 has raised the urgency of understanding how footage from these devices will aid investigations of alleged misconduct. The 2016 Annual Report confirms that video evidence is an invaluable tool for civilians and officers. The percentage of cases that were either exonerated or substantiated was higher when there was video evidence compared to when there was no video evidence. In 2016, the CCRB exonerated only 26 percent of allegations without video evidence compared to 29 percent with video evidence. Following the same pattern, only 10 percent of allegations without video were substantiated in 2016 compared to 17 percent of allegations with video evidence.

Finally, with dedicated support from the Mayor and City Council, the CCRB expanded the scale of its efforts to engage diverse communities across New York City. CCRB’s Outreach Unit, which serves as the Agency’s primary liaisons to all five boroughs, has tripled the number of community-based presentations since 2015. Last year, the CCRB conducted 977 presentations—more than in all of the previous four years combined. These presentations outline civilian rights and responsibilities when interacting with police. The striking growth of the Agency’s outreach efforts signals eagerness from New Yorkers to engage with the CCRB and improve police-community relations.

In addition to more robust outreach efforts, in 2016, the CCRB began alternating the location of monthly Board Meetings between the Agency’s offices in lower Manhattan and off-site community venues. “We began alternating board meeting locations to go directly to communities and engaged community based groups to more actively participate,” said CCRB Chair Maya D. Wiley Esq., “This way, we hear from community members directly about their experiences with the police precincts that serve them. This gives the CCRB a better sense of how to improve our work while also allowing us to facilitate mutual understanding between community members and the precinct commanders and officers who attend.”

Download the complete report here: www.nyc.gov/ccrbreports.

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The New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) is the largest police oversight entity in the nation and is empowered to investigate, mediate, prosecute, and recommend disciplinary action for complaints alleging misconduct by NYPD officers. See NYC Charter § 440(c)(1). The agency's jurisdiction includes excessive and unnecessary force, abuse of authority, discourtesy, and use of offensive language. To further this mission, CCRB issues monthly, biannual, and special statistical and qualitative reports analyzing trends and recurring issues arising from the many thousands of civilian complaints it receives