Denver Sheriff Department Reform Effort

Phase One Status Report

October 31, 2014
The employees of the City and County of Denver strive every day to provide top-notch service to the residents of Denver and to create a world-class city where everyone matters. In recent months, Denver residents have expressed concern and anger about the Denver Sheriff Department and incidents in our jails that have resulted in court cases and questions about Department protocols. I have also been upset by these incidents and am committed to taking necessary action to restore trust in our Sheriff Department.

In July, I ordered a top-to-bottom review of the Department. Since then, we have heard from hundreds of members of our community through meetings in our neighborhoods about what reform should look like. We have talked to sheriff deputies and command staff about what they face day in and day out in the jail. And we have received nearly 70 recommendations for change from Task Forces that worked for several months to examine training, discipline, staff well-being, and policies and procedures in the Sheriff Department.

Those efforts and more have culminated into this report, which marks the end of Phase One of the reform effort. This report is the launch pad for Phase Two, from which the team of Hillard Heintze and OIR Group will begin its deep dive into the Sheriff Department’s organization and policies — including operations and procedures, leadership structure and the Internal Affairs Bureau.

The team of nationally-respected public safety, law enforcement and corrections experts will compare DSD’s practices with the best practices seen across the country. They will develop recommendations for my office and the Executive Steering Committee and assist the city with implementation. The team will also launch a national search for a new Sheriff once the organizational assessment is complete.

Our goals are to set a new standard of accountability in the Department and to rebuild confidence in the system for the community and the deputies. This is not an easy task. It will not be quick. But I am confident that we are on the right path toward creating a Sheriff Department that we can all be proud of.

Michael Hancock
Denver Mayor
As the Executive Director of the Department of Public Safety, I am responsible for overseeing the Denver Sheriff Department as well as Denver Police and Fire. This oversight includes the expectation that deputies and civilians conduct themselves with professionalism and integrity, treat inmates with dignity, and abide by department rules, orders and policies.

Each day the vast majority of sheriff deputies and employees work very hard, follow protocols and serve the residents of Denver with pride. They save lives when inmates lose hope. They care for those with substance and mental health problems and they help prepare inmates for reentry into our community.

In the last year, a number of events have occurred that have led to questions about deputy and employee conduct and jail operations. Is the organizational structure of the Sheriff Department correct? Is training sufficient? Is the Internal Affairs Bureau sufficiently resourced? Is staffing throughout the Sheriff Department adequate? Should hiring practices for all employees in the Department be revised? Is the current discipline process sufficient? Are current use of force policies and procedures in line with best practices? Is the current physical configuration of our corrections facilities contributing to its challenges? I have worked alongside teams of dedicated leaders and community members over the past few months to ask these questions, analyze our operations and identify solutions.

This report highlights the outcome of the initial phase of work and is designed to help inform a more comprehensive assessment of the Sheriff Department, which will occur in the coming months. This report summarizes the work that has been completed and presents recommendations that have been made so far. This information will be used as the basis for the next stage of analysis by outside experts.

I want to thank all of the individuals who participated in meetings and provided thoughtful perspectives, contributing to a significant body of work and in-depth recommendations. There are no simple answers and many complex issues and matters of due process that must be weighed. The reform process is not simple or quick, but it is of vital importance. We all are committed to implementing substantive improvements to our operations, policies and support systems for the employees of the Sheriff Department and the inmates that we protect and serve each day.

Stephanie O’Malley
Executive Director of the Department of Public Safety
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Denver Sheriff Department is the largest Sheriff agency in Colorado and is responsible, among other duties, for booking, processing, housing and providing services to over 36,000 inmates a year who are detained for a range of alleged offenses, from failing to pay traffic tickets to violent felonies and homicide. With a 2014 annual budget of $111 million and over 900 uniformed and civilian employees, the Sheriff Department operates two of the busiest jails in the state, which operate at or near capacity.

In recent months, the Sheriff Department has faced a series of challenges — including complaints about misconduct by deputies, lawsuits related to inmate injuries and fatalities, and demands from the community for improvements in management, training and inmate treatment.

The Mayor’s Office, the Department of Public Safety and the Sheriff Department have taken many steps to address the challenges and to ensure that the agency is upholding its mission, values and commitment to the people of Denver. The City replaced the Sheriff and ordered a top-to-bottom review of agency protocols and operations. City leaders hired experienced, independent experts to assist with the review and reform initiative. Teams of city officials, subject-matter experts and community members participated in Task Forces and committees to review key topics and recommend improvements. Community forums were convened to collect input. Activities, documents and meeting information were posted on a new website (www.denvergov.org/dsdreform). Public input was invited through email and a form provided on the reform website.

The reform efforts have been led by the Sheriff Reform Executive Steering Committee, a panel of 14 individuals including city officials, members of the community and subject-matter experts. Four Task Forces, with over 90 members, met over four months to conduct detailed analysis and make recommendations in the areas of discipline, policies and procedures, staff wellness, and training. Additional committees of city officials analyzed the Sheriff Department’s organizational structure, human resource needs, and internal affairs operations and procedures.

The Denver Sheriff Department is an organization that has existed for 112 years. Our department is comprised of good men and women who are great public servants. To have the honor and long-standing tradition of Dedication, Service and Duty tarnished by the actions of a few has been one of the greatest challenges we have ever faced. We have welcomed the eyes of outside parties into our operation for decades and in that same spirit we are pleased to participate in a complete review of our organization.

Interim Sheriff Elias Diggins
considered the benefits of moving the hiring process from the Office of Human Resources (formerly known as the Career Services Authority) to the Civil Service Commission, the city agency that handles hiring for Police and Fire personnel. City leaders held meetings with commanders and rank and file employees and participated in five public community forums, to listen and document the perspectives of over 500 residents.

Similar themes emerged from the Task Forces, committees, community meetings and discussions with commanders and the rank and file. Recommendations included ways to alleviate stress and improve performance and procedures through more efficient hiring/promotion/demotion/discipline, to support employees with shorter shifts, increase training and wellness initiatives, rotate assignments and increase staffing at the Internal Affairs Bureau. The Discipline Task Force submitted detailed and substantive recommendations (32 of 66 final recommendations), including specific changes to policy and the disciplinary matrix to clarify the importance of treating inmates with respect and what constitutes inappropriate use of force, requiring remedial training for deputies who are disciplined, increasing transparency around cases and increasing efficiency in case resolution.

Certain reforms — including the hiring of additional personnel to process complaints and revised Taser usage policies — have already been implemented and many more are expected to be taken in the coming months. This report summarizes the activities to date in the reform process and will inform consultants who will advise City leaders on next steps.
HISTORY

The Denver Sheriff Department was established on December 2, 1902 during the establishment of the City and County of Denver. The department is charged with providing security in the courts and the county jail and policing duties. In the early years, the Sheriff was sometimes appointed and sometimes elected. Over the following decades, the duties of the Sheriff office and the management structure over that agency and other law enforcement agencies evolved. The title of Sheriff also differed over the years (Director of Corrections, Undersheriff, Warden). Policing duties were separated into the Denver Police Department and the current structure of the Denver Sheriff Department has existed in large part since the late 1960s. Denver’s Sheriff Department is distinct compared to all other Sheriff departments in Colorado, holding the duties of providing security in jails and courts while the Denver Police Department handles community policing. Other than Broomfield, Denver is the only county in Colorado that does not currently elect the Sheriff. State law requires all counties to have a Sheriff. The legal authority for the Sheriff Department comes from City Charter and Article XX of the Colorado Constitution. In 2005, city voters approved a $378 million bond issue to build a new courthouse and detention center, renovate the County Jail and build a downtown parking garage. The new facilities opened in 2010, providing greater capacity in the jails. In 2013, city voters chose to replace the title of Director of Corrections and Undersheriff with the title of Sheriff, effective January 1, 2014.

In addition to being the largest sheriff agency in the state, the Denver Sheriff Department is the third largest law enforcement agency in the state. In 2013, the Department received Triple Crown Accredidation from the National Sheriff Association. The Department operates two separate jails, provides security for the District and County court systems, state inmate transportation, extradition duties, fugitive and K-9 units, Work Release program, and security at Denver Health Medical Center for inmates who are there for care.

The Denver Sheriff Department has about 730 sworn (uniformed) personnel and about 170 civilians. The gender breakdown is 69% male and 31% female. The demographic breakdown is 51% white,
28% Hispanic, 17% African American, 3% Asian and 1% American Indian. Rank and file employees are represented in collective bargaining by the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 27 and they can be members of other unions, including Denver Sheriff Union, Teamsters, Latin American Law Enforcement Association, Black Sheriff’s Protective Association, Denver Sheriff’s Latino Organization and the International Association of Women Police.

The average tenure of employees is 12.1 years. All employees other than the Sheriff are hired through the OHR, a city agency that also manages promotions/demotions and human resource functions and benefits. All city employees hired by OHR must adhere to the Career Service Authority rules. Between January and June 2014, the turnover rate was 4.5%. Of the budgeted positions, 88% are filled and 12% are vacant. In June 2014, the City & County began recruiting for 50 sworn positions.

OPERATIONS

The majority of employees at the Sheriff Department are responsible for operating two of the busiest jails in Colorado, which process over 36,000 offenders each year and house over 2,200 inmates on an average day, including individuals who are awaiting the completion of their court cases and those who are sentenced by the County court system. The Sheriff Department processes all prisoners who are taken into custody by Denver Police or Sheriff Department personnel at the Van Cise-Simonet Detention Center (also known as the Downtown Detention Center) on Colfax Avenue in downtown Denver. The Intake Center processes on average over 100 individuals each day at the Downtown Detention Center. Over 1,400 inmates are housed daily at the downtown facility, which utilizes modern technology and design and allows most inmates to serve their sentence without physical restraints and with access to exercise, education, medical care and other services. Services provided include central property, central laundry, arraignment courts, infirmary and inmate programs that help them earn a GED, religious services and other activities.

Most people who are processed at the Downtown Detention Center are charged with minor offenses and are released within hours or days or are transferred to other institutions. The average stay is over 100 days at this facility. About 20% of inmates will spend at least one month, 12% at least two months and 4% will spend more than six months in a Denver jail.

Prisoners who are sentenced are often transferred to the Denver County Jail on Smith Road in East Denver to serve out their sentences. This facility has a maximum capacity of 830 prisoners and the average stay for inmates exceeds 250 days. The County Jail provides the following services: housing of female prisoners, work release program, alternative sentencing, central kitchen, bakery and the following inmate programs: GED, RISE unit (substance abuse recovery), mental health transition and religious services.
Inmate populations and length of stays have been increasing for years, and especially since 2010, for several reasons. Jails are housing more inmates who have been arrested because they skipped court dates. Felony booking have roughly doubled since 2011 and more inmates have multiple charges and more complex cases, which require longer stays. In addition, a change in law several years ago requires offenders to serve their county sentences before their state sentences, and inmate sentences are lengthening. Current inmates include individuals who are serving up to nine years in the county jail. In 2012, the average length of stay in the jails was 77 days at the County Jail and 34 days at the Downtown Detention Center. In 2013, the average length of stay was 202 days at the County Jail and 82 days at the Downtown Detention Center.

Crowded jails and longer stays create stress for inmates and for Sheriff Department employees. As inmate populations have trended higher, the Department has experienced staffing shortages. Deputies work long hours — as many as 16 hours at a time — and are supervising up to 64 inmates, including violent offenders who are aggressive and violent to other inmates and to jail employees. Many housing deputies are armed only with pepper spray and OPNs (nunchucks) during their shifts in the jails. Deputies often work alone at their posts. Their supervisors, Sergeants, are often required to spend much of their time conducting administrative work due to understaffing. The Department also is working to address a shortage of sergeants. Best practice is for each sergeant to supervise three to seven deputies and the current ratio is 1:9.

The need for overtime began to rise when the Downtown Detention Center opened and continues to challenge the department today. The average employee works 24 hours of mandatory overtime per week, due in part to increasing absenteeism and use of paid leave.
Annual Overtime Cost:
2010 — $4.05 million
2011 — $3.86 million
2012 — $4.05 million
2013 — $5.68 million
2014 (as of Aug. 30) — $4.98 million

In addition to the jails, the Sheriff Department manages other city programs with civilians and uniformed staff. Eight deputies serve documents to individuals across Denver and carry out court-ordered evictions and sales of property under court order — for a total of 11,000 service processes each year. The Sheriff’s Department also operates the City and County’s Vehicle Impound Facility, which impounds and processes about 1,000 vehicles each month and collects roughly $6 million in fees a year. This program includes the maintenance of vehicles at the Impound Facility on York Street.
HIRING

All employees of the Sheriff Department are hired by the Denver Office of Human Resources, and must follow the Career Service Authority Rules established by OHR. The hiring of uniform personnel includes the posting of a position on the OHR website, applications submitted to OHR, written tests by the OHR, and background checks and interviews conducted by the Sheriff Department. The Department will not hire applicants who have ever had a felony conviction, or been convicted of a misdemeanor in the last five years. Additional steps include interviews, a polygraph, psychological screening, background investigation, physical fitness exam and drug screening. If the applicant passes all of these steps, he/she is referred to the Sheriff and the Executive Director of Public Safety for review and selection. Those who are hired then enter the Training Academy.

In 2011, about 74 deputies were hired (16% of the applicants after many were eliminated at different stages). In 2012, about 22 deputies were hired (8% of the applicant pool). In 2013, about 24 deputies were hired (4% of the applicant pool). As of mid-2014, about 50 deputies have been hired. The Department must constantly recruit deputies and other employees because of attrition and in order to safely operate the jails and carry out other duties. About four deputies leave each month due to retirement, taking other jobs, and other reasons.

When those with a rank of Sergeant or higher are considered for promotion, or demoted, a background check is conducted. All sworn personnel undergo an annual background check.

TRAINING

Training for new deputy sheriffs takes place at the Training Academy and the process includes 600 hours of training over the course of four months, in over 100 topics, including firearms safety, safety procedures, report writing and inmate supervision.

After graduating from the academy, newly hired sworn personnel attend a Community Awareness week. During this time, deputies are introduced to a diverse set of agencies and organizations across Denver. The organizations include homeless groups, women and juvenile shelters, and leaders in the Latino, Native American, African American, Asian Pacific, Jewish, and Islamic communities, among others. After Community week, newly hired deputies are assigned to a Field Training Officer Training Program for four weeks. Deputies are assigned to a number of posts to learn in greater detail the procedures and dynamics of their assignment. Once on staff, deputies undergo an additional 40 hours of training annually. Sergeants, captains and other employees also participate in annual training to review key topics, including use of force, identifying suicidal behavior and security procedures.
Support staff and contractors who have regular contact with inmates receive 40 hours of initial training and 40 hours of training each year thereafter. Civilians, not including Security Specialists, receive a minimum of 16 hours of initial training and 16 hours of training each year thereafter. Security specialists receive a minimum of 120 hours of initial training and 40 hours of annual training thereafter.

COMMENDATIONS

The Department has a commendation program that recognizes employees that demonstrate outstanding actions. In 2013, this award was given to two employees: Deputy Sheriff Robert Martin and Security Specialist Blake Torres for their off-duty assistance and service with accidents and injured citizens. The Department provides other recognition programs, including the PRIDE award (Personal Responsibility in Delivering Excellence), the Community Service Award, Merit Award, Distinguished Service Medal and Lifetime Achievement Medal. Of the 232 commendations issued in first half of 2013, the highest number were letters of appreciation from supervisors (97) and PRIDE Awards (71). There are 16 types of commendations and awards.

Commendations are also received from members of the public through letters, emails and phone calls.

COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

Complaints about employee conduct can be sent to the Sheriff Department through the Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB) or through the Office of the Independent Monitor (OIM). Evaluations by the IAB and OIM can result in referral for disciplinary procedures.

INMATE GRIEVANCE PROCESS

The Department has a formal grievance process for inmates to report problems and request improvements or other remedies. The process requires the following steps: the inmate discusses the issue with an employee and files a formal grievance on paper if the issue has not been resolved. Inmates can file a grievance on a

Office of the Independent Monitor

The Office of the Independent Monitor (OIM) monitors the disciplinary process in the Denver Sheriff Department. In late 2013, the OIM issued a report based on a review of the inmate Grievance Process, including grievances filed between January 2011 and June 2013. The OIM issued 11 recommendations on ways to improve the reporting process, the response process and the tracking and reporting process. These recommendations were made based on the identification of gaps and inconsistencies in the process of handling grievances. The Sheriff Department began to address all of the recommendations through new policies, directives and initiatives designed to close the gaps; however, the reforms are ongoing and are still being tested to determine if the solutions adequately address the concerns raised by the OIM.
Grievances can be filed beyond the 10 day time frame in the case of extraordinary circumstances. The grievance must include a detailed statement outlining the complaint, the requested solution, the inmate’s signature and the date the grievance was submitted. The grievance can be given to an employee or placed in a locked grievance box that is available in every inmate housing unit.

Grievances are routed by Sergeants to different departments and the Sheriff Department has 10 working days to respond to each grievance. Grievances can be rejected for failing to meet a procedural requirement. Each grievance is responded to and a copy of the document is given to the inmate and another copy is filed in a centralized spreadsheet. If the inmate is not satisfied with the resolution, the inmate can appeal to the Division Chief of the jail where he/she is housed and then to the Sheriff for a final decision.

In December 2013, the Sheriff Department created a Work Group of employees and representatives from the Office of the Independent Monitor that met nine times until February 2014. This resulted in an overhaul of the procedures and policies related to inmate grievances, which took effect April 4, 2014. The changes included:

- New policies regarding the inmate grievance process including the receipt, tracking, triage and resolution of all grievances.
- Utilization of the Jail Management System for tracking and reporting purposes.
- Adding new categories of grievances: General, Serious, Emergency, Sexual Offense
- Creation of criteria of grievances that must be referred to IAB:
  - Allegations of inappropriate/excessive use of force
  - Allegations of sexual misconduct
  - Bias or discrimination (i.e. ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, gender, age, etc.)
  - Medical (serious bodily injury and/or life threatening)
  - Serious (may impact the safety of inmates or officers)
- Two additional sergeants’ positions have been approved for the IAB to assist with the additional workload of inmate grievances.
- Free phone calls added to all inmate phones to directly contact the Office of the Independent Monitor.

In addition, nearly 50 inmate grievances were identified and subsequently referred to the IAB for investigation. The Sheriff Department also is bolstering resources and streamlining procedures to ensure cases are processed more expeditiously.
The discipline process begins with a report and investigation by the Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB). The process then involves several other offices: the Office of the Independent Monitor, Conduct Review Office and the Sheriff. The Executive Director of Public Safety makes the final discipline determination. The discipline process is required to adhere to two sets of rules — internal Sheriff Department policy and policies established by the Office of Human Resources. Since 2011, the Sheriff Department has been utilizing a complex decision-making process, known as the Disciplinary Matrix, to determine punishment for misconduct or violation of policy. This process includes detailed information about particular actions and types of punishment, which can be made more or less severe based on mitigating or aggravating circumstances. The types of punishment that can be given range from a verbal reprimand, written reprimand, to short suspension and longer suspensions up to 90 days and dismissal. Criminal prosecution is possible, based on a decision by the District Attorney’s Office. Demotions are also possible, based on a decision by the Career Service Authority. A Career Service hearing officer is charged with examining the application of the matrix and the decision-making process of those in the disciplinary chain of command. Hearing officer decisions can be appealed to the Career Service Authority Board, and Board decisions can be appealed to the state district court where the court determines whether the Board followed an arbitrary and capricious standard, but does not
determine whether the discipline imposed was appropriate. Like any state court decision, the judicial determination may follow the court appeal process.

The IAB is currently adding resources to address a backlog in cases, with six on-call investigators scheduled to be hired by November 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total complaints referred to IAB</th>
<th>Complaints that resulted in discipline</th>
<th>Complaints that are active/action pending</th>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>370</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014 through 10/21/14</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>260</td>
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</table>
REFORM TIMELINE

Inmate Grievance Workgroup met 9 times to review grievance process and recommend changes

April 4, 2014
Revised procedures about Inmate Grievance Process take effect

April 2014
Then-Sheriff Gary Wilson creates 4 Task Forces

July 21, 2014
Mayor Hancock announces reform effort, including the removal of Sheriff Wilson and the naming of Elias Diggins as interim Sheriff

August 1, 2014
Executive Steering Committee begins meeting

August 28, 2014
Mayor Hancock announces community meetings and public input process

September 6, 2014
Community Meeting at Manual High School, with 130 participants

September 13, 2014
Community Meeting at Highland Senior Center

September 20, 2014
Community Meeting at Eisenhower Recreation Center

September 23, 2014
Community Meeting at Eagleton Elementary School

September 26, 2014
Discipline task force presented recommendations to other task force members

September 29, 2014
Discipline Task Force submitted 32 recommendations

October 2, 2014
City announces hiring of Hilliard Heintze and OIR Group to review materials and recommendations and provide direction about future reform initiatives, and to recruit a new Sheriff.

October 16, 2014
Summary of Task Forces activities submitted
Sheriff Reform Executive Steering Committee

**STEPHANIE Y. O’MALLEY**
Ms. O’Malley is the Executive Director of the Department of Public Safety, which provides oversight, leadership and policy guidance to the Denver Sheriff, Police and Fire departments. She serves as an appointee of Mayor Michael B. Hancock and is also a licensed attorney in the State of Colorado.

**JANICE SINDEN**
Ms. Sinden was appointed Chief of Staff to Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock in July of 2011. She oversees the Mayor’s priority agenda items, day to day operations of the city and the appointed leadership of the Mayor’s administration.

**SCOTT MARTINEZ**
Mr. Martinez was appointed Denver City Attorney by Mayor Michael B. Hancock in January 2014. Prior to serving as City attorney he served as the mayor-appointed Deputy City Attorney and as a litigator at Denver’s largest law firm.

**ELIAS DIGGINS**
Sheriff Diggins was appointed Interim Sheriff by Mayor Michael B. Hancock in July 2014 and is expected to serve until the City seats its next Sheriff. Sheriff Diggins has been with the Denver Sheriff Department for 20 years and has served in a variety of positions as he worked his way up through the ranks.

**NICK MITCHELL**
Mr. Mitchell is the Independent Monitor, providing independent civilian oversight of the Denver Police and Denver Sheriff departments. Mr. Mitchell is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Association for the Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement.

**COUNCILMAN PAUL LOPEZ**
Councilman Lopez was elected to represent West Denver’s Council District 3 in 2007 and again in 2011. Since then, Councilman Lopez has served in various leadership roles as Chair of the Health, Safety, Education & Services Committee, Chair of the Gang Reduction Initiative of Denver, and Chair of the 2010 City Council Redistricting process.

**COUNCILWOMAN JEANNE ROBB**
Councilwoman Robb has represented Denver Council District 10 since 2003. She serves on the Neighborhood and Planning Committee, the Infrastructure and Culture Committee, and the Government and Technology committee. She is Council’s representative to the Better Denver Bond Executive Committee, the City-wide Special Events Policy Working Group, the Commission to End Homelessness, and the Shared Economy Task Force.
ROSEMARY RODRIGUEZ
Ms. Rodriguez served for three years on Denver City Council, including as president from 2005 to 2006. She served in the Mayor’s Office from 1992 to 2003 in a variety of positions and has been active in numerous grass roots civic and voter advocacy organizations at the local, state and national level.

REV. WILLIAM GOLSON JR.
Rev. Dr. William T. Golson, Jr. serves as Senior Pastor of True Light Baptist Church and President of the Greater Metro Denver Ministerial Alliance.

DR. JOSEPH SANDOVAL
Beginning as a police officer for the City of Arvada, Professor Sandoval has worked in the area of public safety throughout his career. He worked as an attorney for about 20 years and served as Chair of the Public Safety Review Commission and as Chair of the Citizen Oversight Board. He is currently a faculty member in the Criminal Justice and Criminology Department at Metropolitan State University of Denver.

JIM DAVIS
Mr. Davis is founder and CEO of Ascent Risk Solutions, a Denver-based security and risk management firm. He served in Gov. John Hickenlooper’s cabinet as Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Public Safety and as his Homeland Security adviser. Previously, Davis served 26 years in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, retiring as Special Agent in Charge of the Denver Division.

CHIEF ROBERT WHITE
Mr. White was appointed by Mayor Michael B. Hancock as Denver Police Chief in 2011. Chief White has been a law enforcement officer for over forty years and served as the Chief of Police for four different departments, merging two agencies in Louisville, KY.

REGINA HUERTER
Ms. Huerter has worked locally and nationally in juvenile and criminal justice leadership positions since 1978. Currently, she is the Executive Director of Denver’s Crime Prevention and Control Commission where she works to create a more effective and efficient juvenile and adult justice system and alternatives to jail and prison.

MICHAEL J. JACKSON
Deputy Michael Jackson in the president of the Fraternal Order of Police, Denver Sheriff Lodge 27. Deputy Jackson has worked in the department for 20 years.
TASK FORCES

Task Forces were comprised of subject-matter experts, representatives from the Mayor’s Office, the Department of Public Safety, Sheriff Department command staff and partner city agencies, and community organizations. The groups, with over 80 individuals, met for more than four months. Each Task Force was comprised of between 22 and 31 individuals. On August 21, members of three Task Forces (Policy and Procedure, Training and Staffing/Staff Well-Being) met together to review their activities, findings and recommendations. The Discipline Task Force continued to work until September and then submitted recommendations. The list of over 70 recommendations was reviewed and repetitious ideas were consolidated so that 66 recommendations were ultimately submitted to the City.

Policy and Procedure Task Force

► Meetings Held: 15; 28 hours of discussion
► Recommendations: 9

Members:

Ms. Deborah Knapp  
City Attorney’s Office

Sergeant Janelle Orozco  
Denver Sheriff Department

Division Chief Gary Wilson  
Denver Sheriff Department

Mr. Evan Lee  
City Attorney’s Office

Ms. Susan Herschel  
Denver Sheriff Department

Division Chief Marie Kielar  
Denver Sheriff Department

Dr. Dellenia Aguilar  
Servicios de la Raza

Ms. Lisa Hulla  
Office of Human Resources

Sergeant Antoinette Jones  
Denver Sheriff Department

Interim Sheriff Elias Diggins  
Denver Sheriff Department

Ms. Wendy Shea  
City Attorney’s Office

Stephanie O’Malley  
Executive Director of Public Safety

Ms. Amy Stapleton  
Building Bridges

Ms. Tania Valenzuela  
Colorado Progressive Coalition

Mr. Hans Meyer, Esq.  
Hans Meyer, P.C.

Captain Jodi Blair  
Denver Sheriff Department

Mr. Brendan Greene  
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition

Deputy Eishi Yamaguchi  
Denver Sheriff Department

Mr. Nick Mitchell  
Office of the Independent Monitor

Ms. Patsy Hathaway  
Colorado Progressive Coalition
Mr. Victor Lima  
*Colorado Progressive Coalition*

Ms. Kathleen Brand  
*City Attorney’s Office*

Mr. David Broadwell  
*City Attorney’s Office*

Mr. Mark Silverstein  
*American Civil Liberties Union*

Pastor Del Phillips  
*Greater Metro Denver Ministerial Alliance*

Ms. Jesse Perez  
*Colorado Immigration Right Coalition*

Ms. Denise Maes  
*American Civil Liberties Union*

Ms. Christie Donner  
*Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition*

Ms. Gia Irlando  
*Office of the Independent Monitor*

Ms. Deborah Klein  
*Office of the Independent Monitor*

Ms. Marcela Mendoza  
*Denver Immigration & Refugee Commission*

The Task Force conducted a review of written policies and procedures within the department to identify improvements.

- Change the DSD policy regarding ICE I-247 detainers, as DSD no longer adheres to this policy.
- Make changes to the taser policy.
- Makes changes to the inmate handbook.
- Send the Office of the Independent Monitor automated notifications when a use of force incident occurs and there is serious bodily injury.
- Include force variables in the use of force policy and make them accessible to deputies during the writing of their use of force reports.
- Look at Denver Police Department use of force reporting and determine if and how any of their practices might benefit the DSD use of force reporting.
- Address the topic of excited delirium in policy.
- Publish the Inmate Handbook on the DSD Internet site.
- Form a PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) task force to establish PREA investigatory protocols, determine training needs and establish curriculum.
## Training Task Force

- **Meetings Held:** 15; 30 hours of discussion
- **Recommendations:** 22

### Members:

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<tr>
<th>Member Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Christopher M.A. Lujan</td>
<td>Department of Public Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Vivian Stovall</td>
<td>Commission on Aging</td>
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<td>Reverend William Golson Jr.</td>
<td>Greater Metro Denver Ministerial Alliance</td>
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<td>Division Chief Gary Wilson</td>
<td>Denver Sheriff Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Scott Bowman</td>
<td>City Attorney’s Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Evan Dreyer</td>
<td>Deputy Chief of Staff, Mayor’s Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Pete Dunbar</td>
<td>Colorado Peace Officers’ Standards and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Lorrie Kosinski</td>
<td>Director Office of Sign Language Services</td>
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<td>Captain Jaime Kafati</td>
<td>Denver Sheriff Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Lisa Hulla</td>
<td>Office of Human Resources</td>
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<td>Deputy Robert Pablo</td>
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<td>Ms. Maya Mitchell</td>
<td>CALEA Regional Program Manager</td>
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<td>Mr. Paul Miyamoto</td>
<td>Assistant Sheriff, San Francisco Sheriff Department</td>
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The Task Force conducted a review of training policies, procedures and practices to determine the effectiveness and identify where improvements can be made. Examples: Use of force policy and trainings; current Critical Incident Training; leadership training; the cost of DSD’s Training Academy and curriculum; the return on investment in the Triple Crown Accreditation; and the need for the Colorado
Peace Officer Standards and Training (“POST”) certification.

- Create a comprehensive budget line item for training.
- Improve performance management training.
- Implement 100% deputy certification in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT).
- Increase number of deputies as CIT instructors.
- Increase excited delirium training in CIT.
- Complete an analysis of the effectiveness of CIT in reducing sustained use of force complaints.
- Add more sergeants to improve the span of control and improve supervision of deputies while on duty.
- Institute strategic job rotation policy as part of department succession plan.
- Create formalized succession plan comprised of training, recruitment and retention components.
- Include knowledgeable stakeholders on department’s Training Advisory Committee (currently only DSD personnel on this committee) to provide fresh ideas and perspectives on curriculum, training effectiveness and process improvement.
- Include training on Executive Orders and Career Service Rules to minimum training requirements and increase this for leadership positions. Include periodic refresher training for all personnel at regular intervals.
- Add current supervisor training into each leader’s performance enhancement plan.
- Include mental health training as part of DSD’s “special training” curriculum.
- Include special training curriculum for leadership.
- Include remedial training in discipline, where appropriate.
- Allow deputies to access their own training records.
- Increase supervisor training for new sergeants.
- Increase training for new captains.
- Re-evaluate benefit of CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies) membership.
- Invest in online training.
- Become POST certified.
- Fully integrate the disciplinary and training functions within DSD to analyze and make improvements where possible.
### Staffing/Staff Well-Being Task Force

- **Meetings Held:** 16
- **Recommendations:** 9

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<th>Members</th>
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<td>Sergeant Shayne Grannum</td>
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<td>Mr. Greg Morton</td>
<td>Desert Waters Correctional Outreach</td>
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<td>Ms. Jessica Weatherly</td>
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The Task Force reviewed the nature and causes of staff burnout and stressors that may lead to misconduct; identified strategies to increase professional fulfillment and to manage stress in the DSD work environment; and reviewed the 2013 Corrections Fatigue Training.

- Change shifts from 12 hours to 10 hours.
- Change employee break structure to first break 45 minutes and second break 15 minutes.
- Create a subcommittee to study the addition of a chaplaincy program to assist deputies with their well-being efforts.
- Create a subcommittee to initiate a wellness program.
- Require deputies to self-report alcohol and drug use.
- Establish a mentor program.
- Train deputies on anger/stress management.
- Create a corporal position to help support sergeants.
- Create a subcommittee to study mandatory job transfers every 3-5 years.

**Discipline Task Force**

- Meetings Held: 22
- Recommendations: 32

Members:

- **Mr. Jess Vigil**
  *Department of Public Safety*

- **Ms. Rose Ceja-Aragon**
  *Department of Public Safety*

- **Mr. Rick Stubbs**
  *City Attorney’s Office*

- **Mr. Nick Mitchell**
  *Office of Independent Monitor*

- **Mr. Anthony Thomas**
  *Concerned citizen*

- **Ms. Shannon Elwell**
  *Department of Public Safety*

- **Reverend Terrence Hughes**
  *Greater Metro Denver Ministerial Alliance*

- **Captain William Thomas**
  *Denver Sheriff Department*

- **Major Mike Horner**
  *Denver Sheriff Department*

- **Mr. Luis Lipchak**
  *DSD Conduct Review Office*

- **Stephanie O’Malley**
  *Executive Director of Public Safety*

- **Ms. Lisa Hulla**
  *Office of Human Resources*

- **Mr. Al LaCabe**
  *Former Denver Manager of Safety*

- **Dr. Joe Sandoval**
  *Professor of Criminal Justice, Metropolitan State University of Denver*
The Task Force assessed the effectiveness of the conduct principles and disciplinary guidelines; reviewing statistics, trends and patterns to identify opportunities for improvement; developing comparisons to other similarly situated Sheriff Departments to evaluate norms and processes.

- Amend the DSD Department Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles to more effectively reflect that the DSD’s primary duty requires treating inmates with dignity and respect in the performance of DSD’s legitimate duties.
- Reassign DSD’s Rule and Regulation 300.22, Inappropriate Force, from Conduct Categories D thru F to Conduct Categories E thru F (the conduct categories for the most egregious types of misconduct).
- Amend the definitions of misconduct that falls into Conduct Categories D, E, and F on the DSD Disciplinary Matrix so that the most serious violations of DSD’s use of force policies are assigned to Conduct Category F, which has a presumptive penalty of termination. The Task Force considers the most serious violations to be those:
  - which foreseeably result in death or serious bodily injury; or regardless of the resulting injury, if any force; or
  - which constitute a willful and wanton disregard of Department Guiding Principles; or
  - which demonstrate a serious lack of the integrity, ethics, or character related to a deputy’s fitness to hold his or her position; or
  - which involve serious or abusive conduct, including abuse of authority, substantially contrary to the standards of conduct reasonably expected or one whose duty is to uphold the law and to provide for the care and custody of detainees in a professional, dignified, and respectful manner; or
  - which involve a level of force significantly disproportionate to the threat posed by the inmate under the circumstances; or
  - where the totality of the circumstances indicates the force was used, at least in part, for reasons other than legitimate correctional objectives. Such reasons would include, but not be limited to, punishment, retaliation, discrimination, coercion, infliction of pain, or other improper reason.
- Require any reviewer to consider the factors set forth in DSD Disciplinary Handbook § 25.0, special Circumstances, to determine whether a deputy who is determined to have engaged in an inappropriate use of force that falls into Conduct Category E should receive a suspension, demotion, or dismissal (regardless of the presumptive penalty for Conduct Category E) depending
upon the totality of the circumstances with respect to:

- the particular case being considered; and/or
- the particular officer being disciplined.

- Changing language in the conduct categories to reflect the mission and function of the DSD to treat inmates with dignity and respect in the performance of their duties.

- Change DSD’s Rule and Regulation 400.6, Abuse of Prisoners, to Conduct Category F, which, as noted above, has a presumptive penalty of termination.

- Specifications in the RR-400 series: The consensus of the group is to review for possible language changes to provide for more clarity and to make the noted changes/additions.
  
  - **RR-400.2 — Discrimination, Harassment or Retaliation against Prisoners.** The recommendation is to divide RR-400.2 into the following two rules:
    - RR-400.2 — Discrimination, Harassment, or Retaliation against Prisoners due to Recognized Status (which would be assigned to a Conduct Category F); and add
    - RR-400._ — Extending Favors, Liberties, or Privileges to Prisoners (which would be to Conduct Categories D thru F)
  
  - **RR-400.4.1 — Cruel and Unusual Treatment of Prisoners.** The recommendation is to change the title to: Prohibiting Humiliating or Cruel Treatment against Prisoners; and add two new rules:
    - RR-400.4._ — Preventing Humiliating or Cruel Treatment against Prisoners by Other Prisoners (which would be assigned to Conduct Categories E and F); and add
    - RR-400.4._ — Reporting of Humiliating or Cruel Treatment against Prisoners by Deputy Sheriffs or Employees (which would be assigned to Conduct Categories E and F).
  
  - **RR-400.4.4 — Erroneous Release.** The recommendation is to change the assigned Conduct Categories from B thru D to C thru E and change to “shall not erroneously release a prisoner.”
  
  - **RR-400.5 — Harassment of Prisoners.** The recommendation is to change the title and add a new rule:
    - RR-400.5 — Harassment against Prisoners; and add
    - RR-400._ — Reporting Harassment against Prisoners (which would be assigned to Conduct Categories E and F)
  
  - **RR-400.7 — Protecting Constitutional Rights of Prisoners.** Delete this rule and create new policies and/or directives advising of specific constitutional rights retained by inmates that should not be violated, to the extent not already covered by existing rules.
  
  - **RR-400.8.1 — Protecting Prisoners from Physical Harm.** Change the title and add a new rule:
    - RR-400.8.1 — Protecting Prisoners from Harming Themselves or Other Prisoners (which would be assigned to Conduct Categories E and F); and add
    - RR-400.8._ — Protecting Prisoners from Unnecessary Substantial Risk of Serious Bodily Injury or Death Caused by Deputies and Employees (which would be assigned to Conduct Categories E and F)
- **RR-400.8.2 — Failure to Make Require Rounds.** Change the Conduct Categories from D thru F to E and F.

  - These specifications are currently in Conduct Categories C thru F in the disciplinary matrix and should now be in Conduct Categories D thru F:
    - RR-200.11 — Sleeping on Post
    - RR-200.12 — Abandoning Post

  - A specification needs to be added pertaining to the dimming of lights and it should also be in Conduct Categories D thru F.

  - These specifications are currently in Conduct Categories D thru F in the disciplinary matrix and should be elevated to a Conduct Category F:
    - RR-400.2 — Discrimination, Harassment or Retaliation Against Prisoners
    - RR-400.4.1 — Cruel and Unusual Treatment of Prisoners (recommended change to Prohibiting Humiliating or Cruel Treatment against Prisoners)
    - RR-400.5 — Harassment of Prisoners

  - Commensurate with the categorical shift in RR-300.22, Inappropriate Force, DSD’s Rule and Regulation 200.2, Use of Force Reporting, should also be reassigned from Conduct Categories A thru F to an E thru F violation.

  - Change language of DSD Rule and Regulations involving Misleading and Inaccurate Statements to only include the mens rea element “knowing,” and clarify that any such statement is subject to the rule (not just “material” statements), due to issues raised with prior Career and Civil Service appeals.

  - Implement training for deputies in drafting Use of Force reports, and training for supervisors in reviewing those reports.

  - With respect to Inappropriate Force, Appendix C of the DSD Discipline Handbook needs to be revised so as to provide more specific guidance to reviewers on how to apply the definitions of the conduct categories and recognize the types of misconduct that should be considered Conduct Category F violations and, therefore, carry a presumptive penalty of termination.

  - With respect to Inappropriate Force, Appendix C needs to include stronger language that addresses the distinction between the standard of proof in the administrative discipline review versus that in a criminal or civil liability context.

  - With respect to Inappropriate Force, Appendix C needs to include a strong policy statement that reflects the values supporting a shift of Inappropriate Force from Conduct Categories D thru F to Categories E thru F. Similarly, it should also address the values supporting an increase in the penalties for Abuse of Prisoners, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Against Prisoners, Preventing Humiliating or Cruel Treatment Against Prisoners, Harassment Against Prisoners, and Use of Force Reporting.

  - Appendix C needs to emphasize the specific purposes and importance of discipline for inappropriate use of force.

  - With respect to Inappropriate Force, Appendix C needs to emphasize that the community expects
and that DSD requires that deputies use only the amount of force necessary to perform their duties, as viewed from an objective standard.

- Appendix B, History of the Guiding Principles, should be updated to reflect the current review of the DSD disciplinary process.

- There should be a comprehensive review of DSD’s use of force policies, the DSD Discipline Handbook and discipline matrix, and use of force training to ensure compliance with C.R.S. § 18-8-804, which requires:

  ◦ public entities employing peace officers to adopt policies governing the use of force; and
  ◦ peace officers to comply with those policies.

- Among the points on which the comprehensive review should focus are:

  ◦ Emphasizing the DSD’s and community’s expectations for deputies to use only the amount of force necessary to perform duties, as viewed from an objective standard;
  ◦ Stressing that DSD’s expectations are higher than those required by state criminal law on use of force and federal civil law on use of excessive force; and
  ◦ Clarifying how much force may be used to maintain order and discipline, as it pertains specifically to DSD’s duties.

- For deputies that are disciplined but not terminated for inappropriate uses of force, remedial training shall be required in addition to the discipline imposed, but not as a condition of discipline imposed. Such remedial training will ideally occur upon the deputy’s return to work, but shall occur as soon as practicable.

- When circumstances show that supervisors have not satisfactorily performed their duties with respect to uses of force or reporting of such uses, those supervisors shall be subject to disciplinary action commensurate with their offense. If retained as employees of the DSD, these supervisors will be remedially trained separate and apart from the disciplinary action. Such remedial training will ideally occur upon the supervisor’s return to work, but shall occur as soon as practicable.

- The Department of Public Safety shall provide notice in some manner to all deputies of disciplinary decisions, without identifying the disciplined deputy by name, that inform deputies of the types of conduct that management has determined to be unacceptable and of the possible disciplinary consequences of such misconduct. This will also serve to increase accountability and transparency in the application of discipline.

- In furtherance of the goal of increasing accountability and transparency in the disciplinary process, the Department of Public Safety will also publicly provide a list of the nature of pending allegations, without identifying the deputy against whom the allegations are made.

- The Department of Public Safety shall analyze, on a continuing basis, final determinations of discipline so as to decide whether changes need to be made to the policies, practices, and training of the DSD.

- Language should be submitted to the Office of Human Resources for inclusion in the Career Service Rules, requiring CSA Hearing Officers to consider and apply the DSD Disciplinary Handbook and Matrix at appeal.

- The City and County of Denver should consider the merits of moving the DSD out of the Career Service system and into the Civil Service system.
• There is a need to increase the quality and speed of the DSD Internal Affairs process, giving priority to those cases in which inappropriate force, other inmate treatment issues, or deceptive conduct is alleged.

• Change DSD’s Rule and Regulation 200.15.1 — Respect for Fellow Deputies and Employees, from Conduct Category B to Conduct Categories B and C. Broaden the definition to include others (i.e., service providers) or create new rule.

• Change DSD’s Rule and Regulation 200.15.2 — Abuse of Fellow Deputies and Employees, from Conduct Category C to Conduct Categories D thru F. Broaden the definition to include others (i.e., service providers) or create a new rule.

• Review and amend the entire DSD Disciplinary Handbook as necessary to effectuate all of the changes recommended above.

COMMITTEES

Officials from the Mayor’s Office, City Attorney’s Office, Office of the Independent Monitor, Department of Public Safety, Civil Service Commission, Career Services Board, City Council, and Sheriff’s Department participated in special committees that worked hundreds of hours to conduct analysis and provide recommendations to the Sheriff Reform Executive Steering Committee about a number of broad questions related to Sheriff Department operations.

The Organizational Review Subcommittee analyzed the office space, technology, staffing, training and qualifications of investigators, and ways to address the case backlog in the Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB), which investigates complaints against Sheriff Department employees. The subcommittee created additional office space for IAB staff, hired former Arapahoe County Sheriff Grayson Robinson to serve as interim IAB Director and bolster operations, identified technology needs, began the hiring process for on-call investigators, developed a strategy for improving efficiencies with investigations and is reviewing best practices nationwide for IAB operations. The group’s recommendations include steps to ensure that investigators have on-going training, obtain technology to improve efficiency and to assess if the IAB should remain within the Sheriff Department.

The Human Resources Subcommittee analyzed the merits and legal considerations related to moving the Sheriff Department out of the Career Service system and into the Civil Service system, and to analyze cases where jurisdictions have merged police and sheriff agencies. The Subcommittee recommended further analysis of the merits of moving the Sheriff Department out of the Career Service system and into the Civil Service system specifically for the purposes of recruiting and disciplining employees and further analysis of merging the Sheriff Department with the Police Department, which operates in the Civil Service system.
The Community Subcommittee was charged with internal and external communication related to the effort so that employees, constituents and stakeholders were informed and included. Subcommittee members organized all of the city-held community forums, created a DSD Reform website and ensured updated communication was posted to it.

The Peak Team conducted a detailed review of staffing, assignments and management, use of overtime and absenteeism, communication, facilities layouts and ways to improve safety in the jails. In the area of staffing, the group identified challenges with unscheduled absences, restricted work assignments, insufficient mentorship, communication, lack of command staff support, potential overlaps and redundancies in assignments, needs of inmates with mental health issues, high overtime use, blind spots in facilities and a lack of female and special management housing.

COMMUNITY AND EMPLOYEE FORUMS

In September 2014, the Mayor’s Office convened four Community Outreach Forums, two meetings with Sheriff Department commanders and staff, and also attended a forum organized by the Colorado Latino Forum. Nearly 500 people attended the seven meetings. The purpose of the meetings was to explain the reform process and the differences between the Sheriff Department and Police Department and to gather feedback and ideas from residents about ways to improve the Sheriff Department and what they want to see in a new Sheriff. These meetings were posted on the Sheriff Department Reform website (www.denvergov/dsdreform.com) and 75 individuals used the website to provide their feedback.

Mayor Hancock and many members of the Sheriff Reform Executive Steering Committee participated in the Community Outreach Forums and the commander and staff meetings. The Community Outreach Forums began with brief remarks by Mayor Hancock and Stephanie O’Malley and the discussions were facilitated by Derek Okubo, Executive Director of the Agency for Human Rights and Community Partnerships. Follow-up surveys, designed to gauge effectiveness and understanding, were distributed and collected for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Community Forum Meetings, as well as the employee meetings.

The meetings elicited passionate opinions, thoughtful ideas and a wide range of viewpoints regarding how to move forward with the reform process. Similar questions and ideas emerged at many of the meetings. Common themes included:

"Use of force is appropriate at times if there is actual aggression. But there are many reasons it should never happen. Disrespect from a prisoner should not be a reason to use force."

Community participant at September 23 2014 meeting
• Anger about the allegations of excessive force that have been reported in the media and the need for quick and decisive reform.

• Interest in a strong independent monitoring process of conduct of Sheriff Deputies, based on concerns about the process being too internal and allowing for weaknesses.

• Concern about certain conditions in the jails, such as the use of cells that house 8 inmates, and housing inmates with mental health issues together with other inmates. Concerns about mental health issues among inmates going untreated.

• Interest in a range of training for deputies, from gaining knowledge of mental health issues, gaining knowledge of ways to de-escalate conflicts, and ongoing support with reducing stress and anger management.

• Interest in creating a strict discipline process for deputies with regard to misconduct. Many participants discouraged leniency — advocating for quick firing of deputies who use excessive force and engaging in criminal prosecutions for deputies who use excessive force. There was concern that Deputies are not treated the same as members of the public, and given more leniency.

• Interest in conducting random drug testing of officers, mental health screenings and putting personal cameras on deputies.

• High standards for the next Sheriff, including no background of violence, criminal charges, financial problems, mental instability or dishonesty.

• Questions about whether the Sheriff should be appointed or elected.

• Interest in increased transparency about Sheriff Department activities, misconduct allegations, and actions being taken to address problems. Participants said clear policies about what constitutes allowable force and what is not permitted need to be made public and enforced.

• Defining inappropriate force as putting pressure on the neck or chest, any activity that causes broken bones, serious injury or death, or in response to verbal abuse or provocation.

• Defining appropriate use of force as the minimal amount necessary to control inmates and as a last resort.

Surveys
After the first community meeting, the Community Subcommittee created surveys to measure the effectiveness of future meetings. Paper surveys with three questions were distributed to participants at

The ratio of deputies to inmates is 1 to 62. The deputies put their lives on the line every day hoping that they can control the inmates and not be a target for a handmade weapon … They are surrounded by possible riots, suicides, killings, and anger by inmates … The Department cannot support safety when there are such adverse conditions.

Email submitted to website (Weigh In)
the community and employee meetings. The first two questions included a scale of numbers from 1 to 7 and the third question had a space for written comments.

1. The Denver Sheriff Department Reform process is more clear to me because of this forum (Scale: 1 = still not clear, 7 = very helpful)
2. I feel like my concerns and recommendations were heard and captured. (Scale: 1 = not at all, 7 = completely)
3. What could be done to make forums like this more beneficial in the future?

Across the five meetings, the survey elicited an average score of 4 for the two questions.

**Forum 1**  
**September 6, 2014 — Manual High School, 1700 East 28th Avenue, Denver**

This forum was attended by about 130 people and the discussion covered the topics of training, well-being, discipline, policies and procedures and the desired characteristics of the new sheriff. Comments made by attendees included:

- More training and sensitivity is needed to deal with mental health issues.
- Education of officers needs to be changed to stop systematic racial profiling in Denver.
- Make sure trainers are diverse.
- Should have immediate/required services in place to support officers that are threatened, hurt on the job, experience traumatic events, and regular check-ins with officers.
- Need to conduct mental health checks and sensibility screening to prevent future accidents.
- Do preventative-type wellness training that occurs throughout (not just one time) employment. Also involve family as a support system.
- Monetary compensation that is given to victims of sheriff/police abuse should be taken out of the police/sheriff department’s operating budget. This might influence “good” officers to start policing their own.
- In discipline, the first infraction should result in firing.
- A disgrace for Denver. Must be fixed from the bottom up. Need a change of culture/system.
- Are you aware of and following all federal court orders for running a jail?
- Why don’t deputies handcuff unruly detainees? This would prevent many problems. No handcuffs were shown in recent videos.
- Policy should emphasize the use of non-lethal weapons and/or excessive force when the citizen is unarmed.
- The office of the Independent Monitor is not sufficient and is paid by the city and therefore cannot be independent. We request the city work toward removing the power of investigation of police and sheriff abuse and discipline of officers from the departments and vesting it in an independent agency.
• As far as internal affairs, can there be an outside organization, a community organization, to investigate civilian complaints instead of police?
• Why not merge Sheriffs under Police, with Chief White overseeing both?
• What about testing for steroids?
• Next Sheriff should be committed to justice and truth, resistant to corruption of power and have the capacity for introspection.
• Should consider having an elected Sheriff instead of an appointed Sheriff because it would allow for more community control and accountability.

Forum 2
September 13 - Highland Senior Center, 2880 Osceola Street, Denver

This meeting was attended by about 17 people and the discussion covered the topics of training, recruitment, handling of inmates, use of force, leadership, the desired qualities of the new Sheriff, accountability and services for inmates. Facilitators distributed surveys at the end of the meeting and collected them to measure effectiveness of the meeting.

Comments included:

• The mindset and culture needs to be re-set.
• Need mental health training, training on the law, ways to de-escalate situations, knowledge of medications, improved verbal skills.
• Look at best practices across the country.
• Conduct random drug testing of officers (self reporting is not enough).
• Public should be able to view the training videos that are being used for deputies.
• No more deputies shaming inmates.
• There is a shortage of staff and need for more deputies.
• Complaint about an inmate going 40 days with no phone call.
• Need to be able to report inmates who have mental issues.
• Have bells or alarms that sound when doors do not open during 24-hour period.
• Disagree with keeping videos for only 30 days — should be kept longer and viewed regularly.
• Inmate mental health needs to be addressed — prisoners need medication.
• Reconfigure cells for safety and get rid of “Thunderdome” (8 people in one cell).
• Don’t put mentally ill inmates with the general population.
• Culture needs to change to ensure safety of inmates.
• Deputies do NOT have the right to beat up inmates. They have the right to arrest them.
• Excessive force cases need to be responded to quickly.
• Public needs to know what appropriate behavior is of officers and what “use of force” means.
• Performance should be measured by the number of complaints and using guidelines.
• There should be annual reviews and surprise reviews.
• Investigations should be independent.
• There should be anonymous surveys of inmates and deputies.
• The new Sheriff should be honest, open, humane, dignified, emotionally intelligent, collaborative (internally and externally), make decisions collaboratively, be a good listener, be decisive, willing to experiment, willing to learn from mistakes and best practices, show strong leadership.
• Officers who abuse and break the law should be arrested. This is a farce.
• There’s no need for committees. Leadership does not follow through.
• There should be third-party review, consideration of the “Delphi technique.”
• There should be a mechanism for whistleblowers so they are “safe” reporting other officers’ bad behavior.
• Deputies need a voice also. They want to be heard and be proud of their work and proud to put on their uniform.
• Some issues have not been raised - scalding water incident where an inmate was burned.
• Outside audits need to be used.
• The issue of turnover should be addressed.
• There should be employee satisfaction surveys and inmate satisfaction surveys.
• Bonuses should be given to employees for good behavior.
• Have internal affairs more involved.

Surveys:
Eight people completed surveys. On the question of understanding of the reform process, the average answer was 4. On the question of concerns and recommendations being captured, the average answer was 4.88. On the suggestions for improving meetings, answers included recording/streaming meetings online, implementing suggestions, including more input from inmates.
Forum 3
September 20 - Eisenhower Recreation Center, 4300 East Dartmouth Avenue, Denver

This meeting was attended by about 24 people and the discussion covered the topics of recruitment, training, use of force, accountability, leadership, handling of inmates, and desired characteristics of the new Sheriff. Surveys were distributed as in the second meeting. Participants were also asked questions about specific topics being addressed by the Task Forces.

Comments included:

- Deputies need to be honest.
- There should be yearly mental and physical test/evaluation.
- What are best practices, and are we doing them?
- There are organizational problems as people act out when there are not solid systems in place.
- There should be Informal training/mentoring program.
- Use of force should be used only if other or own life is in danger, when officers are being attacked.
- Deputies need to be conscious (and in control) of their level of physical engagement.
- Appropriate level of force cannot cause a serious injury or block the neck/airway.
- Deputies should not receive paid leave if accused of excessive force.
- Employees should be fired with second case of excessive force.
- Employees need to be educated and trained on appropriate use of force.
- Discipline should be swift and certain.
- Employees should receive mental health evaluation; post evaluation.
- Performance of the Sheriff Department should be measured by the number of misconduct incidents and retention.
- Inmates put in isolation should be measured today and six months from now.
- Who is accountable? Manager of Safety/Mayor?
- Need transparency and timely release of information.
- Do we look into the past once an officer has been found lying? Investigate possible previous allegations?
- There should be criminal charges for officers.
- How can whistleblowing be strengthened?
- A citizen oversight group should have access to all information.
- Body cameras should be considered for use and monitored.
• The next Sheriff should have success in prior employment as a Sheriff, operate jails with little or no violence, be highly educated/highly wise, have the ability to self-correct, know and understand mental health, have experience with our system, have integrity and honesty, be willing to share success and failure.

• Candidates for the next Sheriff should be disqualified if they have a history of domestic violence, any history of violence, financial problems, dishonesty, mental instability.

• Inmates should be polled to get suggestions for improvements.

• Need to have a culture of protection of public safety.

• Is ongoing monitoring being done?

• Can deputies be charged criminally?

• The problems are organization-wide.

• Need to use a matrix system.

• What are the procedures used for whistle blowing?

• Access to all information needed for OIM and Citizens Oversight Board.

• How are complaints handled that go to the Citizens Oversight Board?

• Need to have citizens elected to Oversight Board, not appointed.

• Use of cameras, and how long is film kept.

• Need to talk to offenders after they leave the jail.

When and if appropriate use of force should be used?

• Yes, if life is in danger

• Yes, but use least amount of force needed to handle situation

• Yes, when public is in danger

• Yes, but be honest about it

• Yes, but level and number of incidents should be monitored

• Yes, to protect other inmates

What type of punishment should be given for use of force?

• No paid leave

• Re-education and training

• Fired

• Swift and certain

• Mental health evaluation

• Follow up of past use of force

What services should be offered to inmates?

• Mental health

• Drug and alcohol
How to measure performance of sheriff?
- Look at number of critical incidents
- Talk to inmates about abuse
- Retention of employees
- Creation of positive environment
- Uses best practices

Should sheriff be elected?
- No, politicizes public safety
- No, recall process too hard
- No, may not have best background
- Yes, if public does research on candidate
- Yes, no cronyism
- Yes, can make changes without permission of Mayor
- No, should trust Mayor to make good choice

What are qualities for deputies?
- Honesty
- Willing to have on-going testing
- Willing to have re-evaluations for fitness and mental health
- No biases or pre-assumptions
- Uses best practices
- Understanding of population
- Involvement in the community
- Communication skills
- Won’t operate in a vacuum

What is inappropriate force?
- Any force that causes serious injury
- Any pressure on the neck or airways

Is current deputy training sufficient?
- No, need to use best practices
- No, need to have annual retraining

Surveys:
Eleven people completed surveys. On the question of understanding of the reform process, the average answer was 4.18. On the question of concerns and recommendations being captured, the average answer was 4.59. On the suggestions for improving meetings, answers included sending participants meeting notes/minutes and encouraging them to submit suggestions, define the problems better, and publicizing what steps have been taken based on the meetings.
Forum 4  
September 23 - Eagleton Elementary School, 880 Hooker Street, Denver  

This meeting was attended by about 25 people and the discussion covered the topics of desired characteristics of the new Sheriff, services for inmates, qualities when recruiting deputies, training, inmate safety, use of force on inmates, what is appropriate force and accountability. Surveys were distributed and specific questions were asked to focus the meeting. Participants also asked questions — such as what weapons, if any, are permitted in jails for use by deputies, and what services are offered to inmates.

**Desired qualities for the next Sheriff:**

- Leadership skills
- Good financial manager/resource allocation
- Good problem solving skills and ability to address issues quickly
- No serious discipline history
- From a department with no serious allegations
- No abuse charges
- Honesty — a long record
- Outside individual who should understand the community
- Good internal communication skills

**Services that should be provided for inmates:**

- Substance abuse services
- Vocational training/job skills
- Yoga/mind-body
- Transition to community/housing

**Qualities to look for when recruiting employees:**

- College education (psychology, sociology)
- No abuse, violence
- Annual background checks
- Increased diversity
- Behavior patterns should be weighed
- Ability to show self-control
Training needs:

- Techniques to de-escalate
- Minimum use of force — no neck pressure
- Diffusion skills
- On-going training/annual
- Cultural competency — diff interaction/diff cultures (elderly, disabled)
- Balancing security and hospitality — throughout
- More frequent training
- Mediation skills
- Different languages
- Counseling
- How incidents could have been handled better

Inmate Safety

- No guns in jails
- Independent body focused on accountability and collecting complaints directly
- Reduce the ratio of inmates to deputies
- More checks, rounds
- Separation of inmates
- Allow OIM to get complaints directly from inmates

Use of Force on Inmates

- Minimal force should be used
  - OK if in defense
  - To protect other inmates
  - As a last resort
- Not as a response to verbal abuse or disrespect to deputy
- De-escalation techniques should be used
- Controlled
- Videos should be kept longer; victims should be notified if the video is going to be eliminated
- Appropriate to use if aggression is shown by inmates
- Complaint process too long
- Access should be provided to data

What is Inappropriate Force?

- Pressure on neck/head area/chest
- Death as a result of force
- Extreme actions of force
- What was seen in recent videos that were made public
- Lacerations, broken bones
- Intimate relations with inmates
- Excessiveness
Accountability

• No longer in law enforcement
• When instances of use of force are not reported, the individual should no longer be allowed in law enforcement.

Questions/Comments:
• How are deputies trained to stay in control of their emotions?
• Need to keep video tapes longer
• How is rotation of staff handled?
• Do deputies have confidential employee assistance?
• How long is a deputy’s shift, and should it have fewer hours?
• What about putting limits on overtime?
• Can deputies have second or outside jobs?
• Need to have a system in place for refraction follow up
• Why are documents sometimes withheld from OIM and the Citizens Oversight Board?
• What about accountability?
• If a deputy breaks the rules, he should be fired
• If a deputy witnesses those who breaks the rules, they should be fired also
• Need to have cross training

Surveys:
Five people completed surveys at the end of the meeting. On the question of understanding of the reform process, the average answer was 4.2. On the question of concerns and recommendations being captured, the average answer was 4.2. On the suggestions for improving meetings, answers included putting questions online and adding a tracker on the website, explaining how the input will be used and appreciation for providing food.

Forum 5
September 25 - Command Staff — 5440 Roslyn Street, Denver

This meeting focused on gathering feedback from commanders of the Sheriff Department and was attended by about 27 people. Participants expressed anger and worry about employee morale. They expressed concern about rumors circulating among employees and a lack of communication from leadership. The commanders urged leadership to hire more people as soon as possible and to improve
communication in the Department to alleviate concerns. They said use of force is not desired but necessary. Officers are afraid to take action because of fear of punishment. They said they are proud of the work and the Department and are thanked by the community.

Specific comments included:

- They really need support from new sheriff and administration when they need something in the areas of staffing/OT/safety and fatigue.
- They are asking city leaders to listen before it is critical. Problems could have been headed off if help was provided.
- Thank you for speaking with staff.
- The rank and file are upset about the press stories, which are causing stress and hurting morale. There are unknowns and fear. Most staff are getting information from staff, which is not good. There is a rumor mill about outcomes.
- Sharing information is important.
- The deputies are hardworking and want to do a good job. Some are thinking about leaving. We need strong messaging to staff.
- The 49 additional positions are not enough. We need to look in the mirror. We are a team and need to bring back the team concept to make true progress.
- There is a cultural change in the character of applicants. New applicants have college degrees and they want connections to the community; spirit of service.
- We don’t have adequate staffing to plan/recruit.
- Going through LEAN and other decisions thinned us out too much.
- We need to make an internal investment and we need true transparency.
- If we are lumped together with both sheriff and police, are we then considered low priority?
- Look for signs from inmates, i.e. verbal signs.
- This training is very helpful, we should educate more individuals on this process.
- We lose a large number of recruits and need help with retaining employees.
- We have a flat organization.
- There is not a lot of mentoring or training.
- Moving people around is not enough.
- Inside the jail is stressful.
- Employees who are disciplined are getting a scarlet letter. People change and learn from mistakes and become better people. In a 20 year career you are going to make mistakes. Right now people are on eggshells.
- We are a training ground for Aurora Police Department and Denver Police Department.
- In looking at who you promote — must be transparent, must have confidence of peers. There is a lack of confidence in command staff today.
• This department used to be autocratic, with orders given and executed. Some were brought up under that culture and now there is a cultural shift with more input, rapport and interest.
• The positive impact that we have on the lives of inmates is also happening and that is never mentioned in the media.
• We need to look at improving morale and job satisfaction.
• Keep the hiring process in our own agency. Don’t source to Civil Service.
• We need more support with handling mentally ill inmates.
• We have to educate the community about how we change people’s lives.
• Many people thank us.
• A wide number of officers volunteer in the community. There is pride in the uniform.
• People pay attention to promotions and we need more discussions about the process.
• Shout out to Wilson and others for social capital that has been built up.
• We unfortunately have to use force. Many officers don’t want to use it. They are scared of how they will be judged.
• The challenges of the job are the assaults and loss of life.
• Officers are very afraid that a lack of reaction is just as bad as overreaction.

Surveys:
Of the 27 attendees, 16 completed surveys. On the question of increased understanding of the reform process, the average response was 3.94. On the question of concerns and recommendations being heard and captured, the average response was 4.56. On the suggestions question, responses included a need for more time in the process, appreciation for the meeting and a call for additional meetings, and taking action on the suggestions.

Forum 6
Sheriff Department Rank and File — September 25 — 5440 Roslyn Street, Denver

This meeting was an opportunity for Sheriff Department employees other than command staff to provide feedback and to talk directly to members of the Sheriff Reform Executive Steering Committee and to Mayor Hancock. About 150 people attended the 2 ½ hour meeting. The employees expressed concern about the media attention and about the reform process overall. They advocated for employees
to participate in the committees and groups making decisions. They expressed frustration about certain working conditions, including the stress of supervising inmates who are difficult to control, long hours, lack of safety and lack of support. They expressed frustration about the lack of career advancement in the Department, being understaffed and a lack of Sergeants on the jail floors. They asked for better technology and equipment. Above all, they want to be supported and for their voices to be heard and to part of the process of change and improvements.

**Specific comments included:**

- There is no room for movement in the Sheriff Department. Why should we stay here?
- Employees who are disciplined should be separated and detained in other jurisdictions.
- We are understaffed. There are not enough breaks. No sergeants are on the floor. We want variety of shift options.
- It takes over 20 weeks to get a Deputy ready to work in jails. We are low on people. We will be severely understaffed before we get a new Sheriff in office.
- Discipline has been heavy-handed and causes fear in the workplace. Staffing issues decrease our safety. Extra training, better equipment and staffing are what we need.
- Please improve our equipment.
- Deputies are getting severely injured. We work among violent offenders and are trying to keep our house safe. Give us our power back. We need tools.
- We can’t be an afterthought anymore. We are thought of after the Denver Police Department. The issues lead back to staffing levels. We are continually asked to do more with less.
- The Independent Monitor doesn’t know what we do.
- We need to relay to the media that 99% of employees are good.
- Where is our back-up? We have none.
- We need our faith and trust restored. We need voices in support of us.
- Upper command staff gives us a bad name. Rank and file are doing a good job and work with integrity. This needs to be rectified.
- Civilians are judging the actions of uniformed staff. They have no clue what we do. Sheriff should determine and discipline. Reports from those who don’t know what we do won’t stand up for us. We are doing what we are trained to do — not something wrong.
- We are not being represented correctly. You need people doing the job on these committees. We should be evaluated by people who do what we do. Eight deputies are out because they’ve been hurt by inmates. Our leaders are leading us to garbage.
- We should share good deeds with the media. Give us funds to invest in and tell positive stories.
- The City let us down. We have been understaffed for too long. We need two deputies on every post, more in some cases.
- New facility was built without staffing. There is no safety for us.
• Deputies are hesitating and second guessing actions out of fear of being terminated.
• When threatened, you respond the best way you know how.
• Disciplinary process is lengthy and holds up promotions, transfers, job moves to other agencies.
• Who do we follow? Policies have changed but have not been communicated in orders/posts. They say one thing via orders but we are told something different.
• Intake rules say one thing but we’ve been told differently by command staff. This sets the stage that they are in control. The changes to Taser rules hamper us. We are micro-managed and have no power. We need the ability to react immediately with no hesitation.
• The Command staff is given second chances and we haven’t been given a second chance. Will there be discretion to bring disciplined officers back?
• There is not enough communication from the top. Why push for 10 hour shifts at the DDC?
• You should offer 8, 10 and 12-hour shifts. Hours are stressful but doctors, nurses etc. also work these hours. Let employees vote on how many hours the shifts should be. We weren’t asked. Why change hours now — leave it for the new sheriff to decide.
• Need to be honest with public information but don’t give everything up.
• Second-guessing comes through in employee reports.
• Why aren’t we seeing assaults by inmates in the videos?
• How many on the committee have worked in jails?
• When discipline information is released, it is a huge safety problem for us. We are seeing more officer injuries. Inmates are using what they see in the media against us. We should look at the Department of Corrections and other sheriff agencies and see how they release information and still maintain officer safety.
• We are committed to our department. Let us help. Involve us.
• Use Denver website to show support for the Sheriff Department. We need to see support through positive public statements.
• Leaders haven’t worked the floor and don’t know what we do. We are being let down. We need better informed leaders. Everyone needs to be held accountable consistently, no exceptions.
• A Deputy was assaulted two days ago. No one in command staff has acknowledged this and the deputy was given one day off.
• Command staff should be demoted.
• What are you going to do right now? We need someone who can make decisions and have our backs.
• Inmates are now taking control. There are more fights and no officer safety. Deputies are too scared to do their jobs.
• Inmates are using new kite/grievance process inappropriately. We should go back to previous process.
• What do you want us to do to control inmates? Our tools have been taken away.
• Inmates are taunting us — trying to get us to react. It’s getting worse for us.
• Inmates have more rights than we do. Nothing happens when an inmate interacts with officers.
• Inmates provoke us without any negative results.

**Surveys:**
Eight participants completed surveys. On the question of increased understanding of the reform process, the average response was 3.87. On the question of concerns and recommendations being heard and captured, the average response was 4.43. On the suggestions for improving future meetings question, responses included making the meeting public record, requiring the OIM to be present to answer questions, having more meetings, improving audio equipment, and increasing interaction with committee members.

**Forum 7**
**September 24, Barnum Park Recreation Center, 360 Hooker Street, Denver**

The Colorado Latino Forum (CLF), a statewide organization that advocates for greater involvement among Latinos in the election process and a variety of civic issues, including the criminal justice system, organized this meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues and reform efforts with the Sheriff Department, but also to address issues with the Denver Police Department and the District Attorney’s Office. About 100 people attended the meeting.

CLF introduced its People’s Reform Commission, a group of 16 community members from various fields who are interested in improving the criminal justice system. The People’s Reform Commission led the meeting, taking comments from the participants and asking questions and making suggestions. The Commission expressed dissatisfaction that the District Attorney’s Office did not attend and took steps to communicate with that office to convene a meeting in the near future. The group also expressed concern about the prospect of combining the Sheriff and Police departments and said they wanted a high level of public involvement in that discussion. Participants expressed a wide range of views about the Police and Sheriff departments, including concerns about racial profiling, lack of respectful treatment by officers and dissatisfaction with punishment of officers who are charged with misconduct. They advocated for ongoing conversations about reform efforts, rather than one or two meetings, and for acknowledging the lack of trust in law enforcement by the community. Specific comments were made regarding training, hiring and discipline practices, representing a wide range of views.

**Weigh In**
In August 2014, the Community Subcommittee created a website about the reform process that included a way for people to submit comments and suggestions. This input process, called ‘Weigh
In, provided an online form to fill out and submit through the website. Approximately 75 forms were submitted between August 28 and October 1, 2014. The vast majority of the comments were anonymous. Comments were submitted by retired employees of the Sheriff Department, current City and County employees and a terminated Sheriff Department employee. In addition, five letters were submitted by mail.

Examples of comments are:

• Have an elected Sheriff
• Have Sheriff deputies wear cameras
• Change the leadership from top to bottom
• Establish a civilian police board to review complaints
• Increase training, including Use of Force training
• Pay Sheriff Department employees the same as Police Department employees
• Remove telephones from deputy and inmate areas
• Increase anger management training
• Hire additional staff
• Improve supervision by commanders

SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED

While the majority of reform initiatives will be implemented in 2015, the Sheriff Department has already enacted improvements this year, thereby addressing certain issues identified by the Task Forces and other groups working on reform efforts. Below is a summary:

• The Sheriff Department created a new office, known as the Conduct Review Office, to increase the efficiency of reviewing discipline cases (similar to the process used by the Denver Police Department) and to ultimately shorten the disciplinary process overall.

• In April, a new policy and procedures document was distributed to all employees outlining the Inmate Grievance Process, which was designed to increase consistency of tracking and processing and accessibility for inmates.

• As of April 30, the Sheriff Department changed policy to not honor requests from the federal immigration enforcement agency (ICE) to hold inmates unless there is a criminal warrant or other form that gives the Department legal authority for the hold.
• In June, the Sheriff Department converted all forms used by inmates to ensure they are bilingual (English/Spanish). This includes communications known as kites, medical kites and grievance forms.

• In July, then-Sheriff Gary Wilson issued a directive to all Department employees regarding the appropriate use of Tasers in drive stun mode on inmates and clarifying definitions and restricting instances when Tasers can be used at all. This directive listed four types of situations when Tasers cannot be used. Tasers can only be used in drive stun mode during a case of active aggression — “a threat or overt act of an assault, coupled with the present ability to carry out the threat or assault, which reasonably indicates that an assault or injury to any person is imminent” or aggravated active aggression (deadly force encounter).

• In September, the Sheriff Department hired Grayson Robinson to lead the Internal Affairs Bureau on an interim basis.

• Six additional on-call investigators were hired to reduce the Internal Affairs Bureau case backlog.

• The Sheriff Department created a plan to increase the number of classes provided to uniformed staff who have not undergone Critical Incident Training to help them reach the goal of 100% of uniformed staff being trained.

We have a world-class detention facility in Denver’s Detention Center and now we need to make sure we have world-class operation of the system for both the inmates and the Sheriff Deputies.

Councilwoman Jeanne Robb
CONCLUSION

The Denver Sheriff Department is a public agency with nearly 112 years of history serving the people of Denver and protecting and providing care for thousands of inmates each day. The events of the last several months have demonstrated that there is still room for improvement in gaining the public trust and ensuring that all employees adhere to high standards of conduct and professionalism. Over 500 people attended community meetings to provide their input into the reform process — and expressed their concerns about the treatment of inmates. Nearly 100 individuals participated in lengthy and detailed meetings to analyze key issues and to recommend steps for improving staff well-being, training, hiring and discipline. The 66 recommendations are the culmination of hundreds of hours of hard work and collaboration to help the Sheriff Department reach its goals during this reform process. Staffing shortages and lengthening stays have been identified as key issues that need to be addressed quickly. Training improvements have been identified as well as steps that can be taken to support employees who are working long hours and under intense stress.

On October 16, the Mayor’s Office announced the hiring of two consulting firms, Hillard Heintze of Chicago and OIR Group of Los Angeles, to lead the next phase of the reform process. The Sheriff Reform Executive Steering Committee unanimously approved the hiring and the scope of work, which is expected to take at least 21 weeks. The review team will review all Denver Sheriff Department operations and procedures, its Internal Affairs Bureau and its leadership structure and launch a search for a new Sheriff. The agencies will begin work on October 29, including participating in a community meeting to listen to input from Denver residents. The results of the review will be presented to the Mayor and the Sheriff Reform Executive Steering Committee for consideration.