

How do I contact the Community Ombudsman Oversight Panel?



If you want further information, you can contact the CO-OP in writing:

By mail:
The Community Ombudsman Oversight Panel
P.O. Box 190189
Roxbury, MA 02119

By email:
COOP.bpd@cityofboston.gov

Or by phone:
617-594-9216

“Such oversight will serve to promote the professionalism of the Boston Police Department.”

Excerpt from Mayor Thomas M. Menino's Executive Order

What else should I know?

The entire process is confidential. Personal information will not be released. Your appeal and any correspondence will be filed and kept secure.



Mayor Martin J. Walsh

City of Boston Community Ombudsman Oversight Panel

“It is in the best interest of the City of Boston and the Boston Police Department to have an oversight mechanism to build trust and confidence within the community.”

Excerpt from Mayor Thomas M. Menino's Executive Order

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All CO-OP Forms and Publications are available **online** at the address listed below:

Website Address:
www.cityofboston.gov/LAW/CO-OP



What is the CO-OP?

The Community Ombudsman Oversight Panel, or CO-OP, is a three person independent civilian board appointed by the Mayor that is empowered to review Boston Police Internal Investigations cases appealed by complainants.

What cases are eligible for appeal?

Cases eligible for appeal include those with a finding of not sustained, exonerated or unfounded that you feel were not fairly and/or thoroughly investigated.

How do I file an appeal?

You, or your legal representative, can file an appeal once you have received the Notice of Finding from the Boston Police Internal Investigations Unit. You must file your appeal in writing or using a CO-OP Appeal Form (which is sent with your Notice or available for download online) within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date on the Notice of Finding. You may also reference the Appeal Form which accompanies your Notice. This has the *Date Due* listed on it for your convenience. If your appeal is sent via mail, the appeal must be postmarked within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date on the Notice of Finding.

Please mail appeals to:

Community Ombudsman Oversight Panel
P.O. Box 190189
Roxbury, MA 02119

If your appeal is hand-delivered, it must be delivered to the address below by the close of business of the fourteenth (14th) day from the date on the Notice of Finding.

Please hand deliver appeals to:

Community Ombudsman Oversight Panel
City of Boston Law Department
Boston City Hall
Room 615
Boston, MA 02201

You may also email your appeal to:

COOP.bpd@cityofboston.gov

Please reference the IAD Case # in the subject line.

What is the process of appeal?

When an appeal is received within the allotted time-frame, it is assigned to an Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will then review the entire Internal Investigations case file and make a recommendation. Once a final decision has been made, the CO-OP will notify you by mail.

Please refer to the Mayor's Executive Order for more detailed information online at:

www.cityofboston.gov/LAW/CO-OP

How much does it cost?

There is no fee to file an appeal.

Who makes the final decision?

The Boston Police Commissioner makes the final decision on an appealed case. Recommendations by the Ombudsman and the Chief of the Bureau of Professional Standards are considered in addition to case file documents. The Police Commissioner's determination is final and no further appeal is available.

How long will this appeal take?

There is no specific time limit allotted for an appeal. It will take time for the Ombudsman to review the entire case file, especially when a case contains multiple violations. Ombudsmen will be assigned more than one CO-OP case file for review at a time.

What training does the Panel receive?

Each of the Ombudsmen has extensive knowledge and experience in law enforcement, the criminal justice system and/or the judicial process. However, prior to reviewing any Boston Police Department Internal Investigation case, the Panel members receive training at the Boston Police Academy to better their understanding of how police officers are trained while in the Academy. Topics discussed at this training include Constitutional Law, Race and Community Relations, and Use of Force, among others. A second day of training is given by the Department to educate the Panel members on the Internal Affairs Investigation process, the disciplinary process and other related topics.

Will the Panel review cases other than civilian complaints?

The Panel will review a random sample of not sustained, exonerated or unfounded cases that *have not* been appealed by complainants. This external oversight of cases will help ensure that current Internal Investigation practices are fair, thorough and complete even when an appeal is not filed. Not sustained, exonerated, or unfounded cases involving allegations of serious misconduct or unjustified use of force will also be reviewed by the Panel at the discretion of the Department.