

CCA Board Meeting Agenda
January 5, 2026

1. Call to order

2. Introduction by Chair John J. Williams

The Citizen Complaint Authority was established in 2003 under the Collaborative Agreement and a Memorandum of Agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice. We are a seven-member board with a professional investigative staff, headed by a director. Staff investigates allegations of misconduct by police officers and, through the director, forwards the findings and recommendations to the board. Our decisions are based upon a legal standard known as a “preponderance of the evidence.” *Simply stated, the question is, “Does the greater weight of the evidence favor one side or the other?”* Our area of inquiry is solely whether the officer’s actions conformed to Cincinnati Police Department policies, procedures and training.

Our findings generally will be one of the following: (1) Unfounded: where the investigation determined no fact to support that the incident actually occurred; (2) Sustained: where the allegation is supported by sufficient evidence to determine the incident occurred and the actions of the officer were improper; (3) Not sustained: where there are insufficient facts to determine whether the alleged misconduct occurred; and (4) Exonerated: where the greater weight of the evidence indicates the alleged conduct did occur but did not violate police department policies, procedures and training. Our findings and recommendations are forwarded to the City Manager for final determination.

3. Mission Statement

Per Article XXVIII., the Citizen Complaint Authority's (CCA) mission will be to investigate serious interventions by police officers, including but not limited to, shots fired, deaths in custody and major uses of force, and to review and resolve citizen complaints in a fair and efficient manner.

4. Approval of minutes from previous meeting

5. Director’s report presented by Director John Kennedy

6. CPD response to CCA recommendation R2515-R2518 presented by IIS Lieutenant

- #R2515 (CCA #25103)
 - The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) states a common problem that people with disabilities have with law enforcement is that “unexpected actions taken by some individuals with disabilities may be misconstrued by officers or deputies as suspicious or illegal activity or uncooperative behavior.” When Officer Buck initiated contact with Mr. Black, he advised Officer Buck of his physical circumstances, but Officer Buck did not relay the information to other officers as they arrived on scene. As his limited mobility impacted his ability to respond to the officers’ orders, Mr. Black was concerned the officers’ limited awareness and/or failure to understand his condition affected their overall response to him (as detailed above).
 - The remaining officers confirmed to CCA they were unaware of Mr. Black's physical condition until after he was handcuffed. BWC footage showed the officers physically carried Mr. Black to the cruiser rather than used a wheelchair and considered, but ultimately decided against, bringing Mr. Black's wheelchair to the HCJC.
 - The officers' acts, combined with officers' confirmation that they had not received training specific to working with and/or arrests involving individuals with disabilities, suggest a gap in the officers' training. Currently, CPD Procedure Manual § 12.600 Prisoners: Securing, Handling, and Transporting (Revised date 01/20/2023) advises officers to use "a vehicle appropriate for providing the necessary care for the prisoner," but does not provide further guidance. An expansion of CPD’s policy regarding the transport of individuals

with disabilities would be beneficial, while also considering the implications of an individual being released from custody without access to their personal mobility device.

- The ADA offers substantial recommendations and guidance for officer-led interactions with individuals with physical disabilities, with consideration for the safety of all involved. CPD should consider providing officers with training courses to include:
 - sensitivity and awareness;
 - distinguishing behaviors that may be demonstrated because of an individual's disability;
 - how to identify if an individual requires alternate transportation for safety reasons; and,
 - how to communicate with individuals about their disability.
- This additional training would not only improve both officer and community safety, but ensure the person is treated with respect and dignity throughout the law enforcement process.

- #R2516 (CCA #25046)

- Largely, CPD's recommended response for situations involving individuals experiencing a mental health crisis is found in CPD Procedure Manual §12.110 Handling Suspected Mentally Ill Individuals and Potential Suicides. This policy encompasses a significant amount of material and actions which should be enacted in these encounters as appropriate, based on individual need.
- Mr. Taylor's overall concern regarding his interaction was the officers' approach to a welfare check of a person with a suspected mental health condition; in particular, their display and pointing of firearms at an individual who was 1) noted by dispatch to be "unarmed" and 2) allegedly in a state of mental instability. This concern is understandable, as these actions could worsen and intensify an already tense encounter, but officers must balance their personal safety with the unpredictability of a volatile situation. Thus, removing distressing factors (e.g., a firearm) and instituting calm control as quickly as safely possible is essential for de-escalation.
- The procedure emphasizes that "[o]fficers should attempt to use non-confrontational verbal skills, empathy and/or active listening to stabilize a person in crisis" and avoid the use of unnecessary force whenever possible. After the initial tense interaction between the officers and Mr. Taylor, Officer Lutz successfully employed active listening and empathy, which encouraged compliance and a calm demeanor from Mr. Taylor.
- Although the officers followed CPD policy in this circumstance, because there is continuous research and new strategies developed to improve in law enforcement encounters with vulnerable populations, CCA encourages CPD to review and update their strategies as needed to encourage best possible resolutions.
- In specific, considering the intense impact that the mere display of firearms can have upon citizens, CCA recommends CPD consider tracking all displays of firearms as part of the use of force continuum. This has already occurred in analogous law enforcement agencies, such as the Columbus Police Department and Dayton Police Department, which track "display of a firearm" as part of their use of force continuum. Implementation of this would require minimal additional effort, as Axon already tracks when officers unholster their firearm; therefore, compiling the data alongside the incidents to ensure officers are unholstering their weapons appropriately would be only a minor change to make a major impact, pending any notable patterns in the data.

- #R2517 (CCA #24238)

- During the encounter, a bystander stopped to assist Mrs. Jones. The bystander indicated to Officer Agbleke that he knew ASL and could assist. Officer Agbleke relied on the bystander's claim to know ASL in order to facilitate communication with Mrs. Jones. However, a review of the BWC footage showed the bystander was not using ASL, which further complicated a difficult situation. In his statement to CCA, Officer Agbleke stated he was unfamiliar with ASL and therefore assumed the bystander to be capable.
- This miscommunication highlights an important aspect of CPD Procedure § 18.103 Communication with People Who Are Deaf or Hearing Impaired and Use of Foreign Language Interpreters, which states that an officer "should refrain from using family members or friends of the deaf or hearing impaired individual, unless it is urgent to communicate immediately and that is the only option." Officer Agbleke's reliance on a community member, although understandable, placed Mrs. Jones and her family at a disadvantage: Mrs. Jones was unable to communicate effectively and provide necessary information to the police department, nor could she provide a complete statement about what occurred regarding the traffic infraction on Mr. Jones's behalf, who was handcuffed behind his back and without any means of communicating.

- Although the CPD officers in this investigation followed CPD policy, there may be room for training improvements that can better the interactions between CPD officers and the Deaf community. These can include minor changes, such as updating CPD policy to reference “deaf and hard of hearing” terminology rather than “hearing impaired” (which, according to the National Association of the Deaf, the Deaf community has long eschewed) or more impactful changes, such as creating opportunities for officers to learn basic ASL signs. CCA has reached out to CPD’s Training Academy command staff to obtain a better understanding of CPD’s language accessibility opportunities for officers. To date, the Training Academy has not responded. Per CPD’s Staff Notes, the last opportunity for CPD officers to obtain a rudimentary knowledge of ASL for interactions with community members was over five years ago; that is at least ten graduation classes of officers who have not had the opportunity to learn.
 - Additionally, while communication is a large factor in officer encounters with deaf individuals, it is important to recognize that 1) the hearing and comprehension abilities of deaf individuals exist on a spectrum, which impacts their ability to respond to an officer’s directives, and 2) the role that Deaf culture may have in an interaction. For example, while many officers may view the restriction of an individual’s hands to be a standard safety measure, for deaf individuals, it is also a means of silencing. Therefore, access to and use of their hands is a priority, and officers seeking control that may receive unexpected resistance, leading to unexpected escalation.
 - It is vital for officers to receive training that provides not only the legal necessities as outlined with the Americans with Disabilities Act, but also awareness and empathy. CCA recommends CPD work with local organizations to educate CPD officers on Deaf culture and communication to better inform their actions in the future.
- #R2518 (CCA #24193)
 - CCA has a previous case against Officer Johnson where he used the term “fucking retards ” in an incident in 2023, as well as “Yes, this whole thing is fucking retarded,” in this 2024 incident. This CCA case would constitute two known instances of discriminatory and deeply offensive language about individuals with disabilities. This demonstrates a troubling pattern about Officer Johnson’s interactions with the community.
 - It is recommended that Officer Johnson be referred to the CPD’s Internal Investigation Section for further review and potential disciplinary action, as continued violations of CPD’s code of conduct undermine public trust and the department’s mission of equitable service.
 - Furthermore, it is recommended he complete remedial training in customer service and disability discrimination training. Specifically, the training should address the avoidance of inflammatory words is crucial in fostering an inclusive and respectful environment. By providing Officer Johnson with the necessary training, CPD would show commitment to fair and equitable treatment for all individuals.
 - This recommendation is not only a corrective measure but a reaffirmation of CPD’s obligation to uphold professional standards and ensure that no community member is subjected to degrading or dehumanizing language by its officers.

7. Public comment period (not to exceed 3 minutes)

8. Old business

1. CCA #24238 Jessica Jones and Kenneth Jones

9. General discussion

1. CCA #25103 Robert Hall
2. CCA #25053 Monica Brandy and Garry Black

10. New business

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| 1. CCA #25190 Dennis Owusu | 5. CCA #25046 Tashawna Rutherford |
| 2. CCA #25140 Auston Page | 6. CCA #24190 Daivonn Owens |
| 3. CCA #25147 Chanel Jones | 7. CCA #25188 Ajvaire Huff |
| 4. CCA #25123 JJ (Minor) | |

11. Announcements

12. Adjournment to executive session (if required)

13. Reconvene if necessary (if required)

Thank you for viewing and attending the CCA Board meeting today.

Remember, CCA is here to help you address any concerns you have regarding interaction with a Cincinnati Police Officer. While CCA's primary purpose is to investigate specific allegations of serious misconduct by CPD, even if your concern does not fall within CCA's purview, CCA will send all concerns or commendations to CPD on your behalf.

The next Board meeting will be on **Monday, January 5, 2026**, at 5:00 pm. Copies of any of the investigation summaries discussed today are available on CCA's website at www.cincinnati-oh.gov/ccia.

14. Adjournment

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