

CCA Board Meeting Agenda

March 2, 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 recommendations presented by IIS Lieutenant

- **#R2515 (CCA #25053)**
 - 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."¹ 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

¹ Commonly asked questions about the ADA and law enforcement. (2020, February 8). *ADA.gov*.
<https://www.ada.gov/resources/commonly-asked-questions-law-enforcement/#interacting-with-people-with-disabilities>

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.

- **#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 fully communicate, 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 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.

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

8. New business

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| 1. CCA #25124 Jailyn Thorne | 5. CCA #25111 Tyree Gilbert |
| 2. CCA #25070 Brandon Dates | 6. CCA #25152 David Holliman |
| 3. CCA #25157 Jenee Johnson | 7. CCA #25066 Bryonna Boynton |
| 4. CCA #25159 Carletta Bell | |

9. Announcements

10. Adjournment to executive session (if required)

11. 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, April 6, 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.

12. Adjournment

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