



MEDIA ADVISORY

February 2, 2021

COPA SUBMITS FIRST ADVISORY LETTER OF 2021 TO CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT REGARDING SPECIAL WEAPONS & TACTICS TEAM (SWAT) FOLLOWING THE EXECUTION OF A SEARCH WARRANT

The Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) has submitted its first Advisory Letter of 2021, and the first since the inception of the agency’s newly developed Policy, Research & Analysis Division (PRAD) to Chicago Police Superintendent, David Brown.

The Advisory letter addresses COPA’s concern that the destruction/retention of records, as well as established reporting practices of the Department’s Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team following the execution of a search warrant contradict the explicit terms of its own standard operating procedures and may contravene legal obligations. The submission of this letter is timely given the backdrop of COPA’s investigation of the incident involving Anjanette Young and the Department’s recent announcement of the formation of a Search Warrant Committee tasked with a top to bottom review of all search warrant practices, training, policies and materials within the Department.

“This letter serves as an excellent example of the type of issues PRAD is well-suited to address, which includes areas of risk, patterns, or practices identified within the context of COPA investigations, pending or closed, that can be timely researched and conveyed to the Department, external stakeholders, and the public,” said COPA Chief Administrator Sydney Roberts.

Section 2-78-120(m) of the Municipal Code of Chicago (<https://copadev.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Ordinance-COPA.pdf>) empowers the Chief Administrator of COPA to make recommendations to the Superintendent “to improve the accountability, effectiveness, integrity and transparency of the Department.” To fulfill this obligation, as outlined in section 4.4.1 of COPA’s Rules and Regulations, the Chief Administrator may issue an Advisory Letter to the Superintendent if an investigation uncovers a problem that hinders the effectiveness of

Department operations and programs or if an investigation identifies a verifiable potential liability or risk that warrants the Department's attention.

PRAD is responsible for identifying investigative trends through the review of misconduct investigations and related data, identifying opportunities to initiate pattern and practice reviews, and issuing reports that provide prompt notice of operational deficiencies, risk, and opportunities for improvement within the Chicago Police Department. PRAD's mandate compliments the work of COPA's Investigations Section and is consistent with COPA's vision to advance the culture of policing and build trust in civilian oversight in the City of Chicago.

The Department has 60 days to respond, at which point COPA may draft a follow-up letter to address the Department's response. All correspondences pertaining to this Advisory will be posted for public view at ChicagoCOPA.org.

Media Contact: Ephraim Eaddy

Phone:312-771-3718