



KING COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT  
2024 Annual Report

June 2025

Report Prepared By



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# KING COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT 2024 Annual Report

## Message from Sheriff Patricia Cole-Tindall

It is an honor and pleasure to serve as your Sheriff. When I started this job in January of 2022, I highlighted several values I hold dear, including honesty and respect. These values are the foundation for the high standards we hold ourselves to as members of the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO). They are values King County's residents expect and deserve from us.



Over the last several years, KCSO has worked to create consistent Internal Investigations Unit (IIU) policies, procedures, and data sources. We have worked to simplify when and how complaints are investigated and continue to strive to meet reasonable performance outcomes. In March 2024, I implemented substantial enhancements to the policies and procedures that guide the misconduct complaint investigation process. These changes create efficiencies in the process, improve communication between the Office of Law Enforcement Oversight and the Sheriff's Office, reduce the time from initial complaint to final disposition, and help identify cases that may have better outcomes using the mediation process rather than the traditional complaint investigation process. These changes improve how complaint and investigation information is tracked but will require a different approach when comparing data collected after 2022 with data collected between the years 2014 - 2022.

KCSO has contracted with Police Strategies LLC to complete the 2024 Internal IIU Annual Report. Most of the data used to compile this report was generated after the March 2024 changes to IIU policy. Where possible, this report will compare the 2024 data with previous years' data to identify trends that could flag challenges and opportunities for improvement. As we move forward and gather more consistent data using the new standards, KCSO's ability to identify and understand trends will improve.

This report shows that the vast majority of Sheriff's Office employees who provided service to the community did so without receiving a complaint. In 2024 the Sheriff's Office had approximately 1,216 employees. The department handled 335 complaint investigations, an increase of 4.7% from 2023. For further perspective, in 2024 the Sheriff's Office Communications Center received 300,382 emergency calls (911) and 193,145 non-emergency calls. They dispatched deputies to 113,296 calls for service and deputies on-viewed 148,872 incidents, most of which involved contact with one or more people. Of the total 493,527 calls and 148,872 on-views in 2024, 335 incidents (approximately 0.05%) resulted in a complaint.

This report is just part of our continuing effort to be a premier law enforcement agency known for integrity, transparency, and accountability.

Sincerely,

Patricia Cole-Tindall, Sheriff

# King County Sheriff's Office Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals<sup>1</sup>

## MISSION

### Why are we here?

The King County Sheriff's Office delivers compassionate and accountable police services to enhance public safety and community well-being.

## VISION

### Where are we going?

The King County Sheriff's Office is to be an innovative, trusted, and collaborative agency supporting safe, welcoming, and thriving communities.

## VALUES

### How do we do business?

#### Leadership:

- We are honest, direct, and transparent.
- We lead with grace through our diverse perspectives and experiences.
- We are a high-performing organization with a clearly articulated vision of our role in the community and contribution to public safety.
- We are committed to addressing the well-being of our communities.
- We promote positive change toward unity and racial equity through our community-centered initiatives.

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<sup>1</sup> KCSO's statement on its Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals, can be found in its General Orders Manual (GOM) at: <https://public.powerdms.com/KCSO/tree/documents/1757664>

### **Integrity:**

- We are open and accountable to the public we serve.
- We foster a culture that actively identifies and acknowledges problems and welcomes them as opportunities for improvement.
- We take responsibility for our actions, celebrate successes, and address shortcomings.

### **Service:**

- We continually seek to improve how we operate through advances in technology, policy, and using change and performance management.
- We act with speed and persistence to help provide community safety for all.
- We embrace creativity, innovation, and transparency.
- We employ evidence-based, data-driven, and adaptive strategies.

### **Teamwork:**

- We, as one team, work with our partners to deter crime and the fear of crime.
- We foster a respectful work environment.
- We work across boundaries and acknowledge the valuable contributions employees bring to our agency and communities.
- We work to learn, co-create, collaborate, and adjust our services for our diverse communities.

## **GOALS**

### **How will we get there?**

- **Develop Leaders:** Establish leadership continuity and focus on process and project management. Ensure accountability, transparency, and follow-through to better serve our employees.
- **Support our Workforce:** Improve workforce health, well-being, and morale through continued focused efforts to recruit, retain, develop, and support the highest quality employees that reflect the diverse communities we serve.

- **Build Partnerships:** Build and strengthen our public safety partnerships to deliver equitable outcomes, trauma-informed incident response, and effective crime fighting services.
- **Improve Engagement:** Increase support for the King County Sheriff's Office and enhance relationships with our communities by clearly and proactively sharing our mission, values, and achievements.
- **Increase Effectiveness:** Advance our effectiveness by encouraging innovation and by employing emerging technology and data-informed, evidenced-based strategies.

## Sheriff's Philosophy

Every King County Sheriff brings their own philosophy and approach to law enforcement and leadership to the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO). For Sheriff Patricia Cole-Tindall, this starts with policing with compassion and recognizing that King County is a dynamic and growing region, where a diversity of people live together in community. Everyone deserves kindness, justice, and respect from their government and from our department. KCSO's commissioned officers and professional staff are trained to engage with people by meeting people where they are to the best of their ability in a given situation – to listen to someone's needs and connect them with the resources they request and need. This work can be seen not only in our training that includes de-escalation and crisis intervention, but also in the programs we deliver, like our Therapeutic Response Unit (TRU) with mental health professionals, and in the partnerships, we have with other King County departments, governmental agencies, community organizations, and more.

While serving with compassion and grace, Sheriff Cole-Tindall recognizes that it is the Sheriff's responsibility to enforce the law that our councilmembers and legislators adopt. KCSO is one of many parts of the justice and criminal legal system that is charged with enforcing the law and holding people accountable when their actions are unlawful. This system includes the King County's Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Office of Public Defense, District Court, Superior Court, and Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention. But the system also includes other departments, like the Department of Community Human Services, that can influence people

away from potential actions that could be unlawful. In all, the system is guided and funded by the policies and budgets that the King County Council reviews and approves. KCSO partners with every agency involved in the justice and criminal legal system as KCSO enforces the law.

Many people expect accountability from people in their communities and at times rely on the justice and criminal legal system for that accountability. The system can have both beneficial and adverse impacts on our communities and people in our communities. While KCSO is one part of the system, it is a visible part that has daily and direct interactions with people living in, working in, and visiting our communities. Because of this direct interaction and the impact, it can have on someone's life and well-being, people in our communities expect and deserve accountability from King County's law enforcement officers.

The King County Sheriff's Office holds its commissioned deputies and professional staff to high standards. Sheriff Cole-Tindall requires everyone working at the Sheriff's Office to abide by our laws, KCSO's policies, and supervisor direction. While the vast majority of Sheriff's Office employees undertake their duties within these high standards and with professionalism, exceptions do occur. In these rare cases the King County Sheriff's Office has robust and professional internal investigation protocols designed to address both minor and major performance and conduct issues.

Our Internal Investigations Unit is one part of our checks and balances that ensures an objective review of complaints, provides for transparency, supports steps toward corrective action or discipline, and ultimately holds our staff and ourselves accountable to the community when our actions and words do not meet our policies, laws, or high standards. As part of its work in this space, KCSO issues its Internal Investigations Unit report annually.

## Internal Investigations Unit Policy Statement

Reproduced below is a statement from the Sheriff Office's General Orders Manual regarding personnel conduct expectations.<sup>2</sup> The policy statement was updated in August 2024, with new language highlighted in blue font.

### 3.00.000 PERSONNEL CONDUCT

#### 3.00.005 PURPOSE/POLICY STATEMENT: 01/24

A law enforcement agency must maintain a high level of personal and official conduct if it is to command and deserve the respect and confidence of the public it serves. Rules and regulations governing the conduct of members of the Sheriff's Office ensure that the high standards of the law enforcement profession are maintained. Issues of honesty and integrity are of paramount importance in the operation of the Sheriff's Office. The purpose of this section is to provide guidelines and instructions concerning member conduct and responsibility for all members in all of their activities, whether official or personal. Members will be evaluated based on whether or not their actions assist the King County Sheriff's Office in fulfilling its stated mission that the King County Sheriff's Office is a trusted partner in fighting crime, improving quality of life, and reaching its goals to:

- **Develop Leaders:** Establish leadership continuity, focus on process, and project management. Ensure accountability, transparency, and follow-through to better serve our employees.
- **Support our Workforce:** Improve workforce health, well-being, and morale through continued focused efforts to recruit, retain, develop, and support the highest quality employees that reflect the diverse communities we serve.
- **Build Partnerships:** Build and strengthen our public safety partnerships to deliver equitable outcomes, trauma-informed incident response, and effective crime fighting services.
- **Improve Engagement:** Increase support for the King County Sheriff's Office and enhance relationships with our communities by clearly and proactively sharing our mission, values, and achievements.
- **Increase Effectiveness:** Advance our effectiveness by encouraging innovation and by employing emerging technology and data-informed, evidenced-based strategies.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://public.powerdms.com/KCSO/tree/documents/1757974>

Members must conduct themselves at all times in a manner that brings a level of conduct in their personal and official affairs consistent with the highest standards of the law enforcement profession. These standards are outlined in the Core Values adopted by the King County Sheriff's Office:

- Leadership.
- Integrity.
- Service.
- Teamwork.

Violations of these standards will result in corrective action or discipline up to and including dismissal from the Sheriff's Office. In general, members shall:

1. Be honest.
2. Conduct themselves in a manner that creates and maintains respect for themselves, the Sheriff's Office and the County.
3. Avoid any actions which might result in adversely affecting confidence of the public in the integrity of the county government or the Sheriff's Office.
4. Perform all duties in a professional, courteous, competent and efficient manner.
5. Comply with all Sheriff's Office rules, policies and procedures.
6. Obey federal, state, county and municipal laws and regulations.
7. Promptly report to their immediate supervisors' knowledge or reasonable suspicion of criminal activity or violations of any provision of this chapter.
8. Promptly report to their Precinct/Section Commander that their driver's license has been suspended (for whatever reason) and/or if they are ordered to have an interlock device on their vehicles.

Members are responsible for learning and abiding by the rules and guidelines in this chapter. Action may be taken against a member due to a failure of the member to meet the requirements of this chapter or of their position. Such action may be either disciplinary or non-disciplinary in nature. Examples of inappropriate conduct set out in this chapter are illustrative, and not exclusive, as it is impossible to anticipate every possible act of misconduct. Violations of this chapter will be considered misconduct.

The Sheriff's Office has aligned its summary of goals in this policy with the goals identified in its Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals statement. Such alignment allows the Sheriff's Office to send a consistent message, both internally and externally, about its overall objectives in serving King County and expectations it has for its members. This approach is even more effective since the policy provides that members will be evaluated based on whether or not their actions assist the Sheriff's Office in fulfilling its stated mission and goals.

## IIU Complaint Tracking and Reporting

### Increasing Accountability and Transparency

The Sheriff's Office originally engaged Police Strategies LLC to analyze IIU data using the same set of standards for all years reviewed to increase the reliability and consistency of information reported year to year.<sup>3</sup> Because the King County Council has reporting requirements related to misconduct investigations, the Sheriff's Office also relied on Police Strategies' data analysis to ensure compliance with Council's mandates.<sup>4</sup> In September 2019, Police Strategies submitted its first IIU report to the Sheriff's Office, with annual follow-up reports analyzing IIU data through 2022. In 2024, the Sheriff's Office, in partnership with the Office of Law Enforcement Oversight, implemented substantial enhancements to the policies and procedures that guide the misconduct complaint investigation process. The changes create efficiencies in the process, improve communication between the Office of Law Enforcement Oversight and the Sheriff's Office, reduce the time from initial complaint to final disposition, and help identify cases that may have better outcomes using the mediation process rather than the traditional complaint investigation process. This will affect how complaint and investigation information is tracked and requires a different approach when comparing data collected after 2022 with data collected between the years 2014 - 2022.

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<sup>3</sup> Inconsistencies likely resulted from multiple factors, including different approaches to processing and tracking complaints related, at least in part, to changes with the Sheriff's Office's administration, policy and procedures, IIU Command, and thoroughness with data entry. These and other factors all can influence the reliability of the data year to year. Also, over the years, KCSO has changed how it categorizes different types of IIU incidents in the IAPro system. While Police Strategies has corrected data where earlier mischaracterizations have been discovered, undiscovered issues are likely to continue to exist particularly with older data.

<sup>4</sup> Metropolitan King County Council Motion 14002 (2013).

Because the changes in policy affect how complaint information is tracked, it is difficult to effectively compare the data collected prior to 2023 and 2024 with data collected after the policy change. In this report, as with the 2023 Annual Report, Police Strategies has stepped back from its approach of comparing this year's data with previous years and focused on the reporting requirements for KC Council Motion 14002. In future reports, Police Strategies will again complete a comparative analysis of the current year data against previous years going back to 2023.

The Sheriff's Office recognizes the importance of promptly, thoroughly, and fairly investigating misconduct allegations and has made a number of revisions aimed at enhancing the process to ensure that complaints are appropriately categorized, investigated, and documented. Policies related to personnel conduct expectations and misconduct investigations are outlined in GOM 3.00.000, with further information related to complaint processing found in the Internal Investigations Unit (IIU) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) manual. Changes that have been made to clarify conduct expectations and facilitate the investigation of misconduct complaints can be found in one or both of these documents.

One factor related to the reliability of data that was being entered, analyzed, and reported prior to 2023 had to do with identifying the appropriate allegation(s) to use when a complaint was received. When IIU receives a verbal or written statement of misconduct concerning a member of the Sheriff's Office, an IIU Sergeant reviews the submission to determine if the stated facts, if true, would be a violation of any Sheriff's Office policies compiled in the GOM. In past years, IIU has included allegations from throughout the GOM, which is over 925 pages, resulting in confusion about which and how many policies should be cited when identifying allegations. To eliminate duplicate allegations, where similar policy violations relate to the same alleged misconduct involved in a single complaint, Police Strategies made the recommendation in earlier reports that the Sheriff's Office reduce the overall number of potential allegations. IIU's SOP was revised in May 2022 to clarify that only the most appropriate allegations should be included, and only those incorporated into GOM 3.00.00. However, IIU and Police Strategies recognized that as long historical investigation data included overlapping and duplicate allegations, data reliability issues would be perpetuated, particularly when data analysis involved multiple variables and more complex analysis. In the current report, though some data dating back to 2020 is included,

allegation categories are used to help ameliorate the problem with individual allegations that duplicate or overlap with those listed in 3.00.000. Over time, IIU has moved towards only using allegations listed in GOM 3.00.000 and has capitalized and put into bold font the allegations to be used and that match those listed in BlueTeam and IAPro.<sup>5</sup> Also, by providing 2024 data analysis that meets Motion 14002 reporting requirements, problems associated with more complex data analysis are avoided.

Another change made in IIU's 2023 and 2024 Annual Reports relates to terminology. The misconduct complaint data analysis conducted by Police Strategies and presented in its previous reports used some terms that were unique to the analytic approach that had been developed based on IAPro, a software program used to record and track use of force and misconduct complaints.<sup>6</sup> CI Technologies, the company that created IAPro, developed scripts for Police Strategies to extract data directly from the Sheriff's Office's IAPro system.<sup>7</sup> Police Strategies then built a relational database and interactive dashboards to facilitate analysis of the complaint data, making it easier to present complex information about misconduct allegations, findings, discipline, and other matters related to the work of the IIU. However, this approach led Police Strategies to use some terminology that was IAPro related, but different than that used in the GOM or by IIU when processing misconduct allegations, resulting in potential miscommunication. As more complex analysis of the data was conducted, there was potential for exacerbating the impacts of any underlying misunderstandings. This insight provided IIU and Police Strategies with another reason to use a scaled back approach with the 2024 data, focusing the data analysis on ensuring a shared use and understanding of basic terminology and processes.

In addition to Police Strategies sometimes using investigation processing terminology different than that used by the Sheriff's Office, Motion 14002 uses terms that are not defined or commonly used by IIU. To promote data consistency and facilitate a shared understanding of terms and processes related to misconduct investigations, where terminology used in Motion 14002 or

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<sup>5</sup> See GOM 3.00.000, p.2, at <https://public.powerdms.com/KCSO/tree/documents/1757974>

<sup>6</sup> IAPro is the records management software created by CI Technologies. IAPro also is used for recording and tracking commendations, section level discipline, use of force, first level discipline, vehicle collisions and pursuits, and early intervention issues. GOM 14.00.015.

<sup>7</sup> Police Strategies appreciates the collaborative relationship it has with CI Technologies and the assistance provided on this project, which allowed Police Strategies to extract raw data from IAPro's proprietary system.

IAPro data processing differs from that used by the Sheriff's Office, annual IIU reports beginning in 2023 use the lexicon familiar to Sheriff's Office members and incorporated into GOM policies and IIU procedures. Using a shared language approach also will support the statistical analysis central to Motion 14002 requirements. However, when relevant to the data reported below, historical differences in terminology are noted.

## Metropolitan King County Council - Motion 14002 and 2020 - 2024 Complaint Investigation Data

In 2013, the Metropolitan King County Council passed Motion 14002, "requiring that the Sheriff's Office provide to the Council annually a report with data on the results of its internal review of complaints and investigations of employee misconduct." The Motion acknowledged that, "although the overwhelming majority of deputies and employees of the sheriff's office serve with honor and distinction," even isolated or infrequent misconduct can damage the reputation of the Sheriff's Office and negatively impact community trust. While recognizing there is "a well-defined system for receiving, documenting, investigating and resolving complaints of misconduct for its employees," the Motion noted that publicly reporting information on complaints, investigations, and outcomes would increase transparency of Sheriff's Office operations. The Motion also notes the Council's interest in identifying any systemic issues in the Sheriff's Office and opportunities for reform.

The specific topics to be addressed in the annual reports required by the Motion are identified below, with misconduct investigation data provided for the years 2020 - 2024. For reasons discussed above, Police Strategies cannot make reliable comparisons to data analyzed in reports for years earlier than 2020, as it has done in the past.<sup>8</sup> The data that is reported only includes closed cases, avoiding the problems of potentially including a complaint attributed to more than one reporting cycle or counting cases in one category that are re-categorized before the matter is closed. There are five broad categories of information

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<sup>8</sup> Earlier IIU Annual Reports included comparative data dating back to 2014.

required by Motion 14002 (along with some subcategories), and the remainder of this report provides data and discussion in response.

Under Council Motion 14002, IIU annual reports are to include, at a minimum, for each year and the three years prior:

- 1. The number of complaints and allegations received, including information on the origin of the complaint, be it either from a community member or internal.**

<b>Inquiries and Allegations Received For the Years 2020 - 2024</b>					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Inquiries	599	465	344	320	335
Allegations	954	807	602	540	655

Motion 14002 uses the terms "complaint" and "allegation" without defining their intended meaning. The Sheriff's Office uses the term "inquiry," and for purposes of complying with Motion 14002, assumes it is synonymous with "complaint" and will use "inquiry" instead of "complaint" for reporting purposes. The GOM defines "inquiry" as, "An entry into Blue Team that documents a personnel complaint directed to a member of the department which, if true, alleges misconduct by any member of the Sheriff's Office."<sup>9</sup>

When IIU receives a verbal or written complaint of misconduct concerning a member of the Sheriff's Office, an IIU Sergeant reviews the statement to determine if any Sheriff's Office policies are implicated, and then lists as an "allegation,"<sup>10</sup> the specific policy at issue. Numerous allegations may be made against a single member who is the subject of an inquiry, and a single allegation may be made against more than one member.<sup>11</sup>

Each inquiry (which Motion 14002 refers to as a "complaint") that is reported contains one or more allegations against one or more members of the Sheriff's Office. Thus, an inquiry is a single

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<sup>9</sup> GOM 3.03.010 (04/23).

<sup>10</sup> Neither Motion 14002 nor the GOM define the term, "allegation." In conducting and reporting on data analysis for this and future IIU reports, Police Strategies understands that "allegation" is taken to mean, "A claim that a member has engaged in an act in violation of a Sheriff's Office directive, rule, policy, or procedure." This aligns with how the term has been used by IIU.

<sup>11</sup> Note that the misconduct data reported can involve a sworn member or a civilian/professional member working for the Sheriff's Office.

and comprehensive IIU case which may include numerous complaints (related to the same incident), involve multiple members who are the subjects of the complaints, and one or more specific allegations of misconduct.

The total number of both inquiries and allegations received by the Sheriff's Office steadily decreased during the four years 2020 - 2023, though both increased in 2024, particularly allegations, which increased by nearly 18%. The decreasing number of inquiries observed during the four years prior to 2024 could have been attributable to a number of factors, including fewer misconduct claims filed during the COVID pandemic, policy and training changes taking place in response to enactment of Washington State's Law Enforcement Training and Community Safety Act (LETSCA), and IIU's May 2022 SOP revision that clarified that only the most appropriate allegations should be included in an inquiry, and only those outlined in GOM 3.00.00. Also, by 2024, the Sheriff's Office had phased out the use of a complaint classification scheme that included the categories Non-Investigative Matter (NIM) and Supervisor Action Log (SAL). Complaints that might previously have been categorized as a NIM or SAL are now included in the single Inquiry category being used by IIU, which might explain the increase in the number of inquiries and allegations seen in 2024.

<b>Origin of Inquiries Received For the Years 2020 - 2024</b>					
<b>Origin</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Community Member	325	192	137	148	181
Internal	200	185	176	135	111
OLEO	13	6	16	25	24
Other Agency	7	8	3	12	15
Unknown	54	74	12	0	4

While inquiries received from King County community members and those submitted from inside the Sheriff's Office both decreased or were relatively level between 2020 and 2023, external complaints from the community rose by approximately 18% and internal inquiries decreased by 18% in 2024. Also, though the proportion of internal inquiries as compared to those submitted by community members grew during the years 2020 - 2022, there was a smaller proportion of internal inquiries relative to external inquiries in 2023 and 2024. The number of inquiries received

from OLEO and outside agencies in 2024 remained stable compared to 2023. As noted in the IIU 2023 Annual Report, OLEO had an increase in its budget and staff and has been expanding functions over the past several years, providing more capacity for community outreach, complaint intake, and general oversight operations. Also, legislative changes creating a duty to intervene and report misconduct may have had an impact on other law enforcement agencies reporting perceived misconduct by KCSO members. Finally, KCSO began rolling out the use of body-worn cameras (BWCs) in 2023, which may have resulted in more inquiries being filed as potential misconduct was flagged in 2024 by those viewing BWC footage.

After listing the origin of many inquiries as "Unknown" in 2020 and 2021 (and previous years), IIU's quality control efforts contributed to the origin identification for all inquiries by 2023. However, IIU was unable to specify the origin of four inquiries in 2024.

2. The number of complaints, allegations, or incidents<sup>12</sup> in the following areas:
- a. Minor misconduct.
  - b. Major misconduct.
  - c. Use of force.
  - d. Criminal investigations.

<b>Number of Inquiries with Allegations of Serious Misconduct or Misconduct &amp; Number of Allegations of Excessive Use of Force or Criminal Conduct</b>		
<b>Inquiries</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Inquiries - Serious Misconduct	56	57
Inquiries - Misconduct	121	134
<b>Allegations</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Allegation - Excessive Use of Force*	73	64
Allegations - Criminal Conduct*	17	20

\*Both Excessive Use of Force and Criminal Conduct are subsets of Serious Misconduct and Misconduct.

<b>Number of Inquiries of Excessive or Unnecessary Use of Force or Criminal Conduct For the Years 2020 - 2024</b>					
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Excessive or Unnecessary Use of Force	65	35	33	38	41
Criminal Conduct	15	23	16	15	17

<b>Number of Allegations of Excessive or Unnecessary Use of Force or Criminal Conduct For the Years 2020 - 2024</b>					
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Excessive or Unnecessary Use of Force	121	62	64	73	64
Criminal Conduct	19	31	21	17	20

<sup>12</sup> While Motion 14002 asks for data on the number of complaints, allegations, or incidents in the areas listed, the term "incidents" is not defined. As it also is not a term used by IIU or in analyzing misconduct data, there is no data separate from that regarding inquiries and allegations related to "incidents."

Allegations and inquiries involving Excessive or Unnecessary Use of Force decreased by approximately 50% between 2020 and 2021, and then have been relatively stable, though there was a slight uptick in the number of inquiries in 2024 and a decrease in allegations involving the Use of Force during the same period.<sup>13</sup>

Though IAPro, the case management system used for analyzing and reporting misconduct complaints handled by IIU, does not record criminal inquiries and allegations, IIU began gathering this information from other sources beginning with the 2023 IIU Annual Report. Other than in 2021, the number of inquiries and allegations involving criminal misconduct has remained fairly steady, though there was a slight increase in 2024 (17 inquiries including 20 allegations) as compared to 2023 (15 inquiries including 17 allegations).

**3. The number of complaint, allegation, and incident resolutions by classification, to include data on the types of personnel actions taken when complaints are sustained, and data on the administrative actions taken when the investigation results in recommendations for changes in Sheriff’s operations, such as training or policies.**

When an investigation is complete, Sheriff’s Office policy sets out the steps to be taken to ensure that further investigation is not necessary and includes review by the IIU Commander, the Precinct/Section Commander, Division Commander, and others depending on the nature of the allegations involved.<sup>14</sup> Following these steps, the case is sent to the Undersheriff for review and to recommend discipline when appropriate. The Sheriff receives investigations on sustained findings that could result in demotion, suspension or termination and, if required, conducts a due process hearing (called a “*Loudermill* hearing”) for the named Employee.<sup>15</sup> The Sheriff can change

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<sup>13</sup> The higher number of allegations and inquiries in 2020 is most likely attributable to the widespread protests that took place in the summer of 2020 following the murder of George Floyd, with the decrease in 2021 and 2022 at least partly related to the COVID pandemic.

<sup>14</sup> GOM 3.03.190.

<sup>15</sup> The Supreme Court’s decision in *Loudermill v. Cleveland Board of Education*, 470 U.S. 532 (1985), and subsequent cases established that Fourteenth Amendment due process rights mandate that a public employee be given the opportunity to be heard and to review evidence supporting the outcome prior to termination or the imposition of other significant discipline, such as demotion or suspension without pay.

the discipline recommendation made by the Undersheriff.<sup>16</sup> Following the investigation and review process, one of six potential findings is made for each allegation raised:

1. Unfounded: The allegation is not factual and/or the incident did not occur as described.
2. Exonerated: The alleged incident occurred but was lawful and proper.
3. Non-Sustained: There is insufficient factual evidence either to prove or disprove the allegation.
4. Sustained: The allegation is supported by sufficient factual evidence and was a violation of policy.
5. Undetermined: The completed investigation does not meet the criteria of classifications 1 through 4. This may involve the following: The complainant withdraws the complaint; the complainant cannot be located; the complainant is uncooperative; or the accused Member separates from the Sheriff’s Office before the conclusion of the investigation and the investigator cannot reach another classification.
6. Performance Related Training: Complaints where the accused member admitted to the conduct and counseling and/or training was provided.<sup>17</sup>

Disposition of Inquiries					
Finding	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Exonerated	201	125	120	100	133
Unfounded	86	70	63	70	42
Sustained	88	67	44	39	54
Non-Sustained	67	45	41	30	33
Performance Related Training	0	1	14	59	70
Undetermined	18	11	14	9	3
Mediated	1	1	0	3	1
No Finding <sup>18</sup>	5	11	7	3	1
Info Only <sup>19</sup>	240	212	102	42	43

<sup>16</sup> GOM 3.03.200.

<sup>17</sup> GOM 3.03.190. The sixth finding was added during the Sheriff's Office's comprehensive 3.03.000 policy changes in 2023.

<sup>18</sup> "No Finding" is the disposition IIU uses when a complaint investigation runs past the 180-day deadline for completing the process.

<sup>19</sup> "Info Only" is the disposition used if a matter that comes to the attention of IIU does not contain an allegation that involves a potential policy violation or if one of the six primary dispositions does not fit the investigation outcome.

Disposition of Allegations					
Finding	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Exonerated	424	290	222	176	262
Unfounded	140	148	118	115	78
Sustained	127	101	91	54	88
Non-Sustained	87	78	60	40	68
Performance Related Training	0	1	20	72	79
Undetermined	24	13	18	12	4
Mediated	1	1	0	3	2
No Finding	12	25	15	8	1
Info Only	139	150	58	60	73

Number of Sustained Allegations and Action Taken					
Action Taken	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Written Reprimand	51	16	19	14	24
Suspension	22	25	20	16	23
Corrective Counseling	31	15	18	16	17
No discipline	6	23	22	3	10
Termination	10	12	7	7	9
Performance Related Training	5	12	4	7	10
Transfer	9	0	10	8	0
Other	3	13	1	0	0
EAP	11	5	1	0	0
Unknown	2	1	6	1	0
Demotion	2	0	5	0	0
Resignation	0	2	0	0	0

The number of inquiries and allegations found to be Exonerated increased by 33% between 2023 and 2024, with a nearly 30% increase in Sustained inquiries and a 40% increase in Sustained allegations during the same period. The disposition involving Performance Related Training has increased since 2021 and was up by 15% in 2024 for inquiries and up nearly 10% for allegations as compared to 2023. Unfounded inquiry dispositions dropped from 70 to 42 (40%) between 2023 and 2024.

In 2024, there were 93 Sustained allegations, as compared to 72 in 2023, an increase of approximately 22%. For Sustained allegations in 2024, there were increases across the most common categories of actions taken, with some increasing more significantly: Written Reprimand (14 in 2023, 24 in 2024), Suspension (16 in 2023, 23 in 2024), Corrective Counseling (16 in 2023, 17 in 2024), No Discipline (3 in 2023, 10 in 2024), Termination (7 in 2023, 9 in 2024), and Performance Related Training (7 in 2023, 10 in 2024).

<b>Number of Members with Sustained Findings and Action Taken</b>					
<b>Action Taken</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Written Reprimand	40	14	11	12	20
Corrective Counseling	30	13	17	15	17
Suspension	12	16	12	8	17
No Discipline	4	14	13	2	4
Performance Related Training	5	10	4	4	8
Termination	3	5	3	3	3
Other	1	9	1	0	0
Transfer	3	0	3	4	0
EAP	4	3	1	0	0
Demotion	1	0	1	0	0
Resignation	0	1	0	0	0

Sixty-nine (69) members had Sustained findings in 2024, as compared to 48 in 2023, an increase of approximately 31%. The most frequent action taken on these Sustained findings was a Written Reprimand, followed closely by Corrective Counseling or Suspension, with Performance Related Training the next most frequent outcome. None of the Sustained findings in 2024 resulted in a Transfer, referral to EAP, Demotion, or Resignation.

4. The number of individual Employees that have accrued three or more complaints (inquiries) in the reporting year or eight or more complaints (inquiries) total in the reporting year and the three prior years. The Sheriff shall identify the outcome of the complaints and note whether any personnel or administrative action resulted from the complaints (inquiries) for these Employees.

Number of Employees with 3+ Inquiries in 2024 or 8+ Inquiries for 2021 - 2024		
	Employees with 3 or More Inquiries within Reporting Year (2024)	Employees with 8 or More Inquiries within Reporting Year and Three Prior Years (2021 - 2024)
All Dispositions	31	28
Sustained Dispositions <sup>20</sup>	3	1

Personnel Actions for Employees with 3+ Sustained Inquiries in 2024 <sup>21</sup>	
Personnel Action	Number
Corrective Counseling	1
Suspension	8
Training	1
Written Reprimand	5

Personnel Actions for Employees with 8+ Sustained Inquiries for Years 2021 – 2024 <sup>22</sup>	
Personnel Action	Number
Corrective Counseling	3
Suspension	1
Training	2
Written Reprimand	4

In 2024, there were 31 Sheriff's Office members with three or more inquiries (compared to 36 in 2023), with three members receiving a Sustained disposition on 3 or more inquiries (as

<sup>20</sup> Personnel actions can have more than one entry per employee, so the numbers below do not equal the Sustained Disposition figures, 3 for members with three or more inquiries in 2024 and 1 for members with 8 or more inquiries during the years 2021 - 2024.

<sup>21</sup> Personnel actions can have more than one entry per employee, so the numbers listed do not equal the Sustained Disposition figures, 3 for members with three or more inquiries in 2024 and 1 for members with 8 or more inquiries during the years 2021 - 2024.

<sup>22</sup> Personnel actions can have more than one entry per employee, so the numbers listed do not equal the Sustained Disposition figures, 3 for members with three or more inquiries in 2024 and 1 for members with 8 or more inquiries during the years 2021 - 2024.

compared to two members in 2023). In the years 2021 - 2024, there were 28 members with eight or more inquiries, with one member receiving a Sustained disposition on 8 or more inquiries. In contrast and as reported last year, during the period 2020 - 2023, 65 members had eight or more inquiries, with two members of this group receiving Sustained dispositions.

For members with three or more Sustained inquiries in 2024, a Suspension was the most frequent personnel action, providing an indication of how seriously the Sheriff's Office takes repeated findings of misconduct. However, for members with eight or more Sustained inquiries during 2020 - 2024, only one received a Suspension.

Most inquiries filed with the KCSO IIU do not result in a finding of misconduct for the members named in those inquiries or are addressed through counseling and training. As noted in previous reports, many factors can influence whether a member is more likely to receive a complaint, such as whether the member is Sworn or Professional, whether the member regularly engages with the community, the member's specific job and shift assignment, and work location, among others. While some or all of these factors may result in more inquiries filed against some KCSO members, the low rate of Sustained dispositions should provide reassurance that members receiving 3 or more inquiries in a single year or 8 or more over four years do not necessarily or likely represent a trend of employees engaging in problematic conduct.

**5. Narrative information on any trends identified through its internal investigations and complaint process, and recommendations of any potential legislative changes that the Sheriff's Office has identified in its evaluation of complaint data that, if implemented, could improve public trust in the law enforcement.**

Substantial changes to policies and procedures related to the misconduct complaint investigation process have occurred in recent years. These changes have included a revision to the IIU Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) manual and collaboration with the Office of Law Enforcement Oversight (OLEO) aimed at increasing data reliability and complaint processing efficiency, improving communications between the Sheriff's Office and OLEO, reducing the time associated with resolving complaints, and identifying cases appropriate for referral to mediation. While the data analysis provided throughout this report meets the requirements of Motion 14002, the

many policy and procedural changes that have taken place to facilitate process improvements also impact how data is collected and tracked. Thus, it is difficult to compare 2024 misconduct complaint data with that from earlier years using the wide range of variables considered in IIU annual reports prior to 2023. Nonetheless, a number of trends from the 2024 misconduct complaint processing information are detailed in the current report and summarized below.

- The total number of both inquiries and allegations received by the Sheriff's Office steadily decreased during the four years 2020 - 2023, though both increased in 2024, particularly allegations, which increased by nearly 18%. The decreasing number of inquiries observed during the four years prior to 2024 could have been attributable to a number of factors, including fewer misconduct claims filed during the COVID pandemic, policy and training changes taking place in response to enactment of Washington State's Law Enforcement Training and Community Safety Act (LETSCA), and IIU's May 2022 SOP revision that clarified that only the most appropriate allegations should be included in an inquiry, and only those outlined in GOM 3.00.00. Fluctuations in complaint numbers are not unusual and do not necessarily reflect an increase or decrease in actual findings of misconduct. While inquiries received from King County community members and from members inside the Sheriff's Office both decreased between 2020 and 2024, external complaints from the community rose by approximately 18% in 2024 and internal inquiries decreased by 18% during the same time period. Also, though the proportion of internal inquiries as compared to those submitted by community members grew during the years 2020 - 2022, there was a smaller proportion of internal inquiries relative to external inquiries in 2023 and 2024.
- Community based inquiries in 2024 neared the higher number received in 2021. The number of inquiries received from OLEO and other outside law enforcement agencies in 2024 remained stable compared to 2023. As noted in the IIU 2023 Annual Report, OLEO had an increase in its budget and staff, and has been expanding functions the past several years, providing more capacity for community outreach, complaint intake, and general oversight operations. Also, legislative changes creating a duty to intervene and report misconduct may have had an impact on other agencies reporting perceived misconduct by KCSO members. Finally, KCSO began rolling out the use of body-worn cameras (BWCs)

in 2024, which may have resulted in more inquiries being filed as potential misconduct was flagged by those viewing BWC footage.

- After listing the origin of many inquiries as "Unknown" in 2020 and 2021 (and previous years), IIU's quality control efforts contributed to the origin identification for all inquiries by 2023. However, it was unable to specify the origin of four inquiries in 2024.
- Allegations and inquiries involving Excessive or Unnecessary Use of Force decreased by approximately 50% between 2020 and 2021, and then have been relatively stable, though there was a slight uptick in the number of inquiries in 2024 and a decrease in allegations involving the Use of Force during the same period.<sup>23</sup>
- Though IAPro, the case management system used for analyzing and reporting misconduct complaints handled by IIU, does not record criminal inquiries and allegations, IIU began gathering this information from other sources beginning with the 2023 IIU Annual Report. Other than in 2021, the number of inquiries and allegations involving criminal misconduct has remained fairly steady, though there was a slight increase in 2024 (17 inquiries including 20 allegations) as compared to 2023 (15 inquiries including 17 allegations).
- The number of inquiries and allegations found to be Exonerated increased by 33% between 2023 and 2024, with a nearly 30% increase in Sustained inquiries and a 40% increase in Sustained allegations during the same period. The disposition involving Performance Related Training has increased since 2021 and was up by 15% in 2024 for inquiries and up nearly 10% for allegations as compared to 2023. Unfounded inquiry dispositions dropped from 70 to 42 (40%) between 2023 and 2024.
- In 2024, there were 93 Sustained allegations, as compared to 72 in 2023, an increase of approximately 22%. For Sustained allegations in 2024, there were increases across the most common categories of actions taken, with some increasing more significantly: Written Reprimand (14 in 2023, 24 in 2024), Suspension (16 in 2023, 23 in 2024), Corrective Counseling (16 in 2023, 17 in 2024), No Discipline (3 in 2023, 10 in 2024),

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<sup>23</sup> As previously noted, the higher number of allegations and inquiries in 2020 is most likely attributable to the widespread protests that took place in the summer of 2020 following the murder of George Floyd, with the decrease in 2021 and 2022 at least partly related to the COVID pandemic.

Termination (7 in 2023, 9 in 2024), and Performance Related Training (7 in 2023, 10 in 2024).

- Sixty-nine (69) members had Sustained findings in 2024, as compared to 48 in 2023, an increase of approximately 31%. The most frequent action taken on these Sustained findings was a Written Reprimand, followed closely by Corrective Counseling or Suspension, with Performance Related Training the next most frequent outcome. None of the Sustained findings in 2024 resulted in a Transfer, referral to EAP, Demotion, or Resignation.
- In 2024, there were 31 Sheriff's Office members with three or more inquiries (compared to 36 in 2023), with three members receiving a sustained disposition on 3 or more inquiries (as compared to two members in 2023). In the years 2021 - 202, there were 28 members with eight or more inquiries, with one member receiving a Sustained disposition on 8 or more inquiries. In contrast and as reported last year, during the period 2020 - 2023, 65 members had eight or more inquiries, with two members of this group receiving Sustained dispositions.
- For members with three or more Sustained inquiries in 2024, a Suspension was the most frequent personnel action, providing an indication of how seriously the Sheriff's Office takes repeated findings of misconduct. However, for members with eight or more Sustained inquiries during 2020 - 2024, only one received a Suspension.

In addition, as Police Strategies LLC has noted in all of its reports, Motion 14002 and the Sheriff's Office do not use the same terminology in reference to some aspects of misconduct complaint processing. To promote data consistency and to facilitate a shared understanding of misconduct complaint related terms and processes, annual IIU reports beginning in 2023 use lexicon found in the GOM and IIU SOP that is familiar to Sheriff's Office members and many in the King County community, though makes note of some differences.

- It is recommended that King County Council consider making legislative changes to Motion 14002 to align its terminology to that used by IIU, which would foster transparency and communication in evaluating misconduct complaint data and serve the goal of improving public trust in law enforcement.