

A street scene at dusk or dawn, viewed from a car's perspective. The sky is a deep red, and the city buildings are visible in the background. The street has white and yellow lane markings. There are trees on the left and right sides of the street. A traffic light is visible on the right side of the street, showing a red light. The text is overlaid on the image.

Department of Police Accountability Mediation Division

Presented by:

Mediation Director: Alexandra Schultheis

Introduction

Allie Schultheis

- 1996 – Graduated from UC Law San Francisco (formerly Hastings)
 - Practiced civil law, raised family
- 2015 – Became certified as a mediator
- 2016 – Began volunteering for Office of Citizen Complaints as a mediator
- 2019 – Began working for the DPA
- 2022 – Began as DPA Mediation Director
- 2023 – Continue education in ADR including Restorative Justice Conferencing

History of DPA Mediation

1995

Office of Citizen Complaints (OCC) (Former name of DPA) Mediation Program established.

2007-2018

Donna Salazar, previously associated with Community Boards of San Francisco, managed the OCC Mediation Program.

Ms. Salazar maintained a deep connection with Community Boards and recruited many CB alums to participate as OCC volunteer mediators. We are fortunate to continue with strong ties to this important nonprofit.

2018-Present

Sharon Owsley served as the DPA Director of Mediation through 2021.

Allie Schultheis, a former OCC volunteer mediator, assumed the role of Director of Mediation in 2022.

DPA Mediation – What is It?

- A division within the Department of Police Accountability;
- An alternative to investigation in resolving complaints against SFPD members;
- We set up in-person or virtual meetings with SFPD and complainants where the parties can communicate directly with each other in a calm, safe, and productive manner.

Mediation Division Mission

- Facilitate direct communication between officers and the public to resolve misunderstandings and conflicts;
- Help improve the relationship between the SFPD and the community;
- Foster conversations where the parties are free to present their perspectives in a calm, safe, and productive environment.

Mediators

- Neutral 3rd parties. Not employees of the DPA or the SFPD.
- Panel of approximately 35 unpaid volunteers that have completed at least a 40-hour mediator training certification course;
- Skilled professionals from a variety of backgrounds with experience mediating a range of issues;
- Cannot be a current or former sworn member of the SFPD, cannot be involved in criminal practice, and cannot represent or be associated with a firm representing the City, the SFPD, the complainant or an individual officer as a plaintiff or defendant in a civil or criminal action.

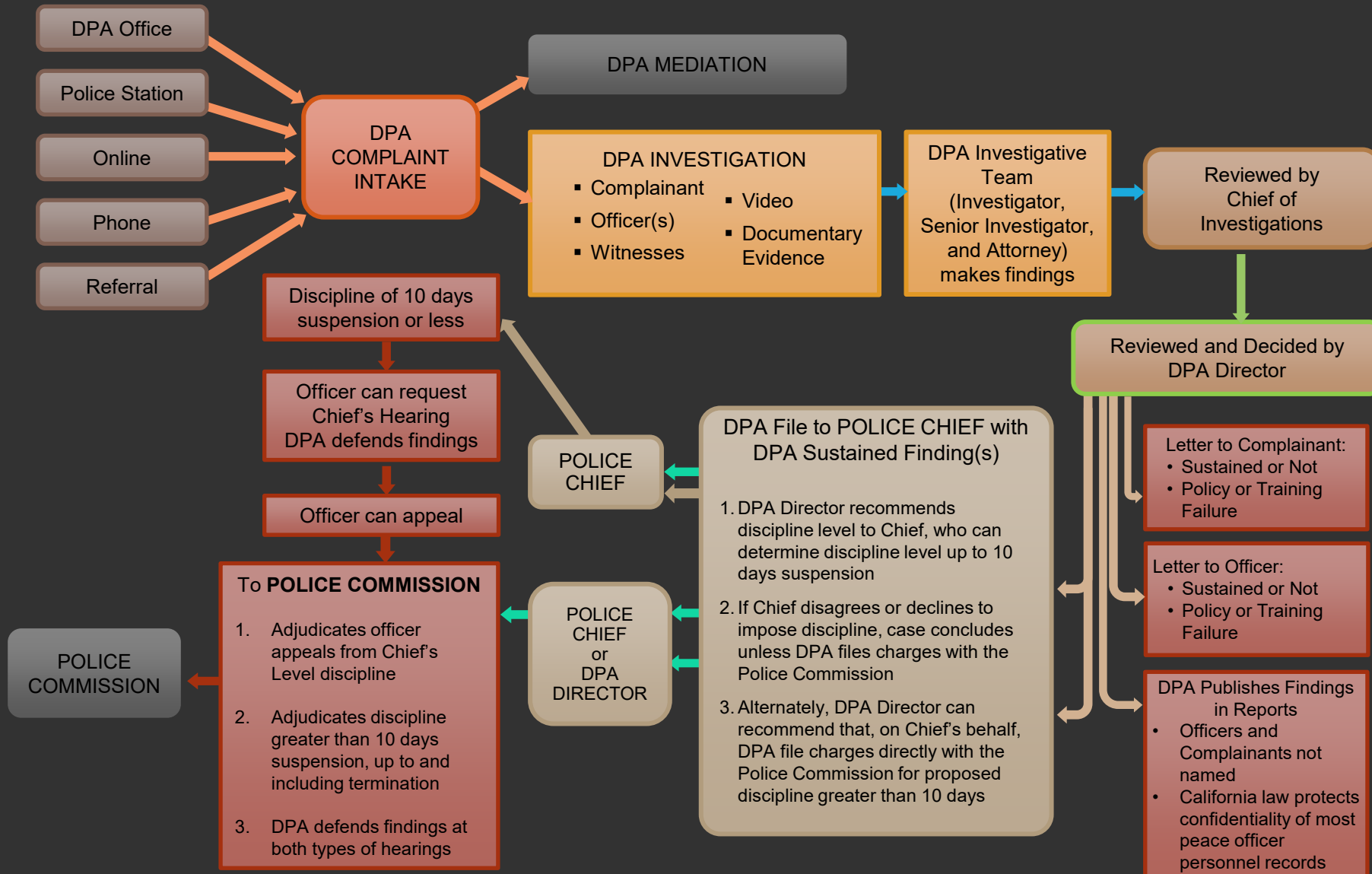
Critical Features of DPA Mediation Program

- A non-disciplinary alternative to the investigation process.
- Voluntary participation by both the complainant and officer is required.
- Settlement agreements are not required.
- Proceedings are confidential.
- Provides a forum where each party can present their perspective and gain mutual understanding.
- Interpreting services are available.

Category of Cases Eligible for Mediation

- Not all cases can be mediated.
- Currently, the types of allegations that are eligible for mediation include Conduct Unbecoming (e.g. inappropriate behavior/comments), Unwarranted Action (e.g. detaining a person without cause), and Neglect of Duty (e.g. failure to write an Incident Report).
- We check to ensure that both the complainant and the officer are eligible as well.

DPA COMPLAINT PROCESS OVERVIEW



Mediation Case Referral Process



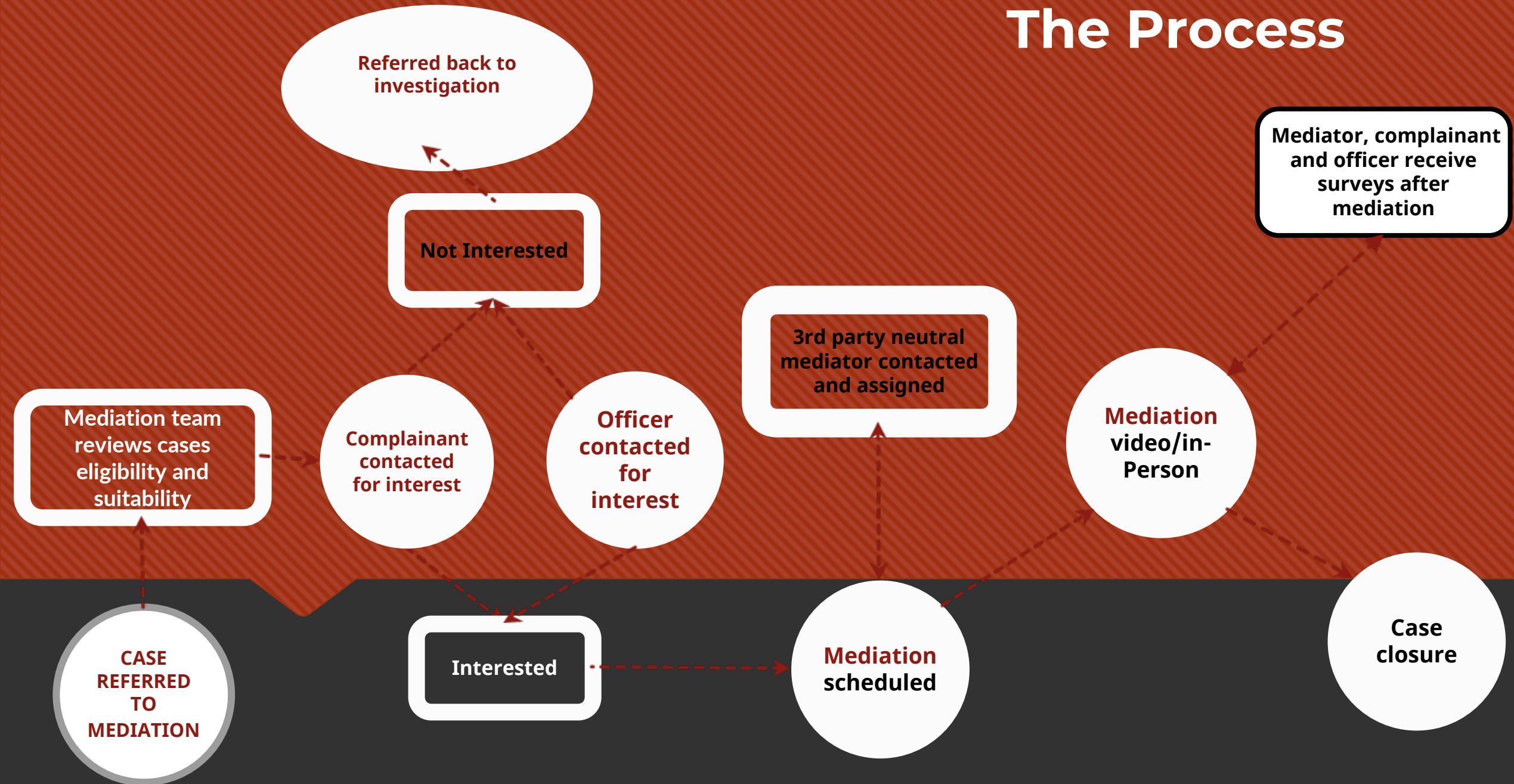
Mediation Objectives

- Improve relationship between SFPD and the community.
- Foster conversations where parties are free to present perspectives.
- Trained 3rd party mediators help people resolve differences in a constructive manner.
- Impact the attitudes, understandings, and behavior of the officer and community member.
- Allows parties to resolve their differences themselves, rather than depend on the judgment of others.

How Do Participants Feel?

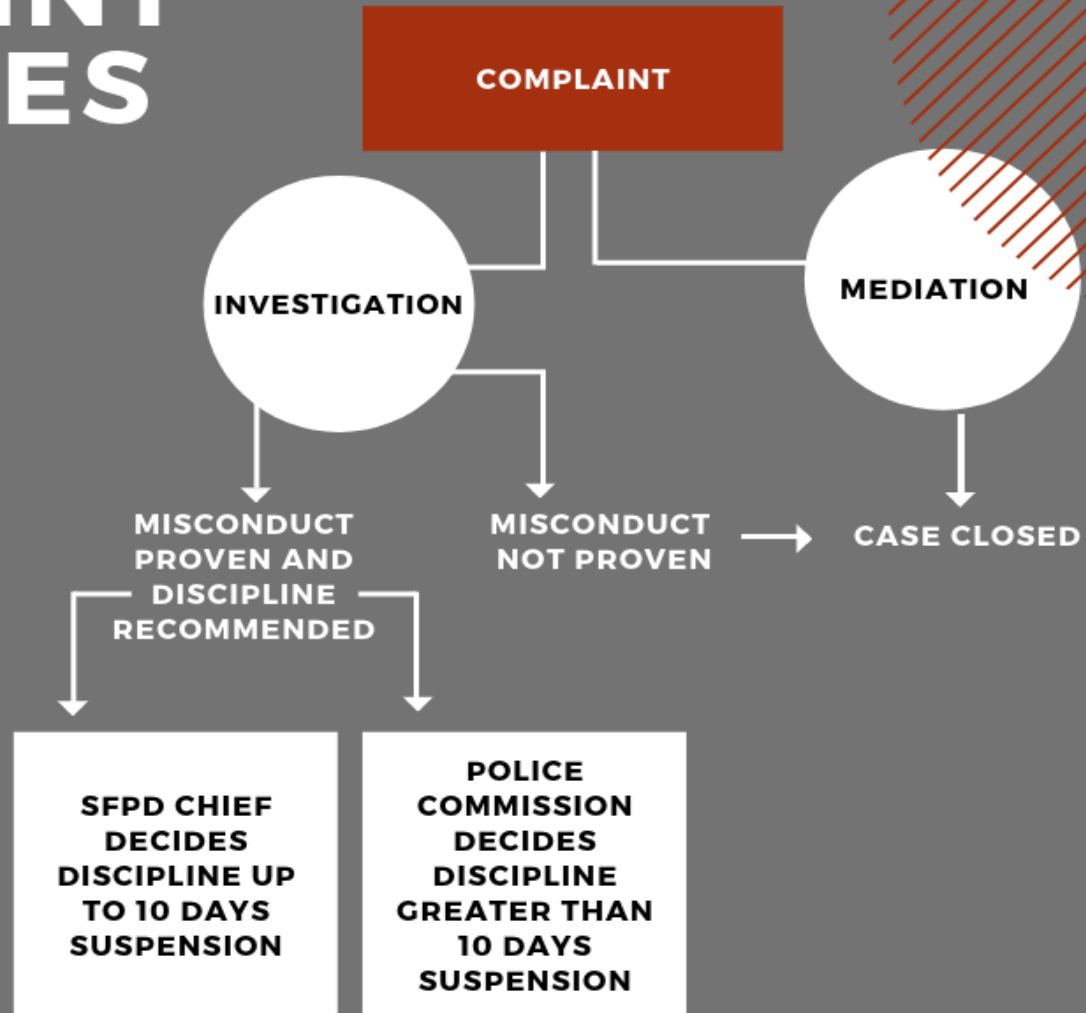
- According to DPA Exit Surveys, 93% of participants rated their experience with the Mediation Process as either “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied.”
- 97.5% said they felt the mediators provided a safe environment to freely express their concerns and issues.
- “I truly believe that mediation is the best way to bridge the communication divide between the police and the community we serve.” Former SFPD Captain.
- “It’s all about communication and understanding each other’s perspective . . . Without the help of DPA I would not have the opportunity to . . . Understand the police actions.” Complainant.

The Process

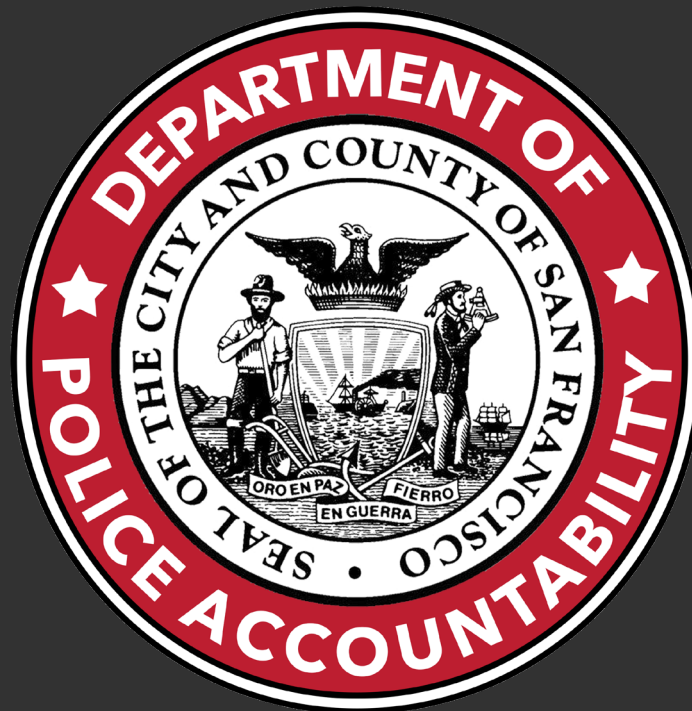


COMPLAINT OUTCOMES

DEPARTMENT
OF POLICE
ACCOUNTABILITY



Thank You



www.sfgov.org/DPA