



Independent Office of Law Enforcement Review and Outreach (IOLERO)

2025–2026 Annual Report



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Executive Summary

The Independent Office of Law Enforcement Review and Outreach (IOLERO) respectfully submits this Annual Report for FY 2025-2026 (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026).

This Report is unique in that it addresses two operational items over separate time frames: (1) IOLERO's implementation of Measure P from 2022-2025 as independently evaluated by Pivot Consulting Group, and (2) IOLERO's continued oversight work during the 2025-2026 fiscal year. It also comes during the interim transition marked by the May 2026 departure of IOLERO's former Director and the County's recruitment for a new Director which will take place over the coming months.

IOLERO's report on the two major operational items is positive.

First, with respect to IOLERO's implementation of Measure P, the Pivot Audit found that from 2022-2025 IOLERO successfully implemented the ordinance by establishing effective civilian law enforcement oversight in Sonoma County. IOLERO is proud of this accomplishment with full credit owed to its hardworking Staff, and to the Sheriff's Office's professional cooperation without which the establishment of a self-sustaining oversight program would not have been possible in so short a timeframe.

The Pivot Audit also identified thoughtful "opportunities" and "recommendations" for augmenting IOLERO's oversight functions going forward, including a more proactive, transparent and professional two-way dialogue with SCSO.

The Pivot Audit is submitted to the Board of Supervisors along with this Annual Report and can be separately reviewed at <https://sonomacounty.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/independent-office-of-law-enforcement-review-and-outreach/triennial-review>. IOLERO's Statement on the Pivot Audit can also be viewed at the same link and is separately included as **Appendix A** to this Report for additional reference.

Second, with regard to on-going civilian oversight activities during FY 2025-2026, IOLERO continued its core work auditing SCSO investigations. Data shows a continued positive trend in the completeness, timing and substance of SCSO investigations and analyses of policies and legal issues. Indeed, the percentage of SCSO investigations found to be "complete" has now exceeded 90%, and compliance with other investigation and auditing matrices is similarly improving. IOLERO has no reason to doubt that this positive trend will continue.

Some additional developments are also noteworthy. A court confirmed that IOLERO has authority to issue subpoenas as part of its whistleblower investigative function, permitting IOLERO and SCSO to proceed with greater clarity. See *IOLERO v. Sonoma County Sheriff's Office*, 119 Cal.App.5th 668 (1st Dist. 2026). IOLERO also released its investigative review report into the officer involved shooting of David Pelaez-Chavez which can be reviewed on IOLERO's website at <https://sonomacounty.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/independent-office-of-law-enforcement-review-and-outreach/audits-and-investigations>. The summaries of that investigation and related audit can also be viewed later in this Report. That investigative review was completed in the prior fiscal year but IOLERO's report was not published until FY 2025-2026.

Over the next several months Sonoma County will be conducting a recruitment for a permanent Director. During this transition, IOLERO's Interim Director and Staff will focus on maintaining IOLERO's oversight work at the highest level of quality. This includes core auditing and investigative reviews and reducing the audit backlog. In addition, IOLERO will engage directly with SCSO to identify areas in which oversight can be strengthened, administrative burdens alleviated, and disagreements reduced.

In short, IOLERO can report that having successfully established a self-sustaining and effective civilian oversight program, IOLERO is now well-positioned to build on and augment its core oversight program through deliberative and thoughtful implementation of other Measure P authorities. This can only be achieved through cooperation, transparency and positive engagement with SCSO to which IOLERO commits.

Message From The Interim Director

This year marks the 10th anniversary of IOLERO's operations. Much has been accomplished but it has also been a bumpy road. Between 2016 and 2020 IOLERO operated under an ordinance that provided little guidance or substantive oversight authority. From 2020 to 2022, Measure P (which was enacted in 2020 to correct deficiencies in the original ordinance) was placed on hold by a state administrative agency due to labor law disputes.

Thus, IOLERO was not able to begin in earnest to establish a civilian oversight program under Measure P until July 2022. At that time, IOLERO had only one auditor to do so. A deliberative choice was therefore made at that time to implement civilian oversight by leveraging limited staffing through focused detailed policy and legal evaluations as part of IOLERO's core audit and review function.

This approach paid dividends. Through focused and detailed policy and legal reviews and analyses, and supported by the professional cooperation of SCSO, IOLERO successfully implemented a self-sustaining civilian oversight program for Sonoma County during the 2022-2025 period. This effort was not perfect. Nevertheless, it accomplished the essential goal of creating an effective oversight infrastructure upon which additional Measure P functions can now be built. As a result, IOLERO is set to expand its oversight operations under Measure P.

Expanding IOLERO's oversight functions will require continued cooperation and positive engagement with SCSO. Input from other stakeholders will also be needed to ensure that community interests across all levels are heard.

As Interim Director, I am committed to maintaining IOLERO's core oversight functions at the highest quality level and to reinforce positive engagement with SCSO and other stakeholders. The goal during this interim period is to solidify IOLERO's accomplishments and advance them if possible so that the next Director can hit the ground running.

Message From The Community Advisory Council Chair And Vice-Chair

The Community Advisory Council (CAC) continued to experience changes in its membership during fiscal year 2025–2026. During that time, the CAC was comprised of Nathan Solomon and Robin Jurs (replaced by Susy Martes) District One; David Jones, District Two; Lorena Barrera and Trevor Ward, District Three; John Azevedo and Michael Miller, District Four; Imelda Martinez De Montano and Nancy Pemberton, District Five; and Alberto Botello, At Large. Throughout the year, the Council continued to recruit and orient members while maintaining representation from each supervisorial district.

During the second half of 2025, the CAC finalized the work of several existing ad hoc committees, including completing policy recommendations related to the Sheriff's canine program, monitoring implementation of the Sheriff's commitment to develop a RIPA policy, expanding community education regarding SCSO policies related to immigration enforcement, and increasing community awareness of the CAC and IOLERO through enhanced outreach, educational materials, and public engagement.

The Canine Policy Ad Hoc Committee completed a comprehensive review of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office canine program and, following extensive research, public input, and collaboration with Sheriff's Office personnel, presented its findings to the Community Advisory Council. In October 2025, the CAC unanimously approved a formal letter recommending to Sheriff Eddie Engram proposed policy enhancements intended to strengthen accountability, transparency, training, reporting, deployment standards, and community trust in the Sheriff's canine program. The recommendations reflected the Committee's year-long evaluation of existing policies and national best practices and represented one of the CAC's most significant policy initiatives during the fiscal year.

During the fiscal year, the Community Advisory Council also adopted a formal resolution supporting IOLERO's independent investigation into the July 2022 fatal shooting of David Peláez Chavez by members of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office. The resolution recognized the importance of independent civilian oversight in officer-involved deaths, expressed support for IOLERO's investigative work and recommendations, and reaffirmed the CAC's commitment to transparency, accountability, and public confidence in law enforcement oversight. Through its adoption of the resolution, the CAC emphasized the importance of ensuring that critical incidents involving the use of deadly force are thoroughly and independently reviewed in accordance with the intent of Measure P.

In January 2026, the Community Advisory Council (CAC) held its fourth annual Strategic Planning Workshop to establish priorities for calendar year 2026. The 2026 Work Plan includes several new initiatives, as well as continuing to address our responsibility to engage the community and educate the public. The community engagement ad hoc committee was reorganized, and new ad hoc committees were established to implement the independent investigations provisions of Measure P; to increase language access between SCSO staff and the public; to assess and recommend changes to the SCSO's continued provision of information to ICE; and to increase participation in programming at the Adult Detention Facility.

The CAC formally adopted its 2026 Work Plan in March 2026, reaffirming its commitment to improving transparency, accountability, and trust between the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office and the community it serves.

The Community Advisory Council (CAC) remains appreciative of the continued support provided by the IOLERO staff throughout the fiscal year. The assistance of Executive Director John Alden and Community Engagement Manager Lizett Camacho was instrumental in helping the Council plan, organize, and implement its work. Shortly before the end of the fiscal year, Executive Director John Alden departed IOLERO, having provided dedicated leadership and support to both the CAC and the Office. The Council expresses its gratitude for his service and contributions to advancing civilian oversight in Sonoma County and wishes him continued success in his future endeavors. The CAC also recognizes the dedication of the entire IOLERO staff, including those who continue to support the Office during this leadership transition, for their continued commitment to advancing the goals of Measure P by promoting civilian oversight, transparency, accountability, and meaningful community engagement with the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office.

I. Brief History of IOLERO and Measure P

IOLERO was initially created by the Board of Supervisors through an ordinance following the death of Andy Lopez during an officer-involved shooting. IOLERO officially commenced operations in 2016 with a Director and one administrative staff and only general guidance from the ordinance. After much trial-and-error, IOLERO was unable to establish self-sustaining civilian oversight under these restrictive conditions. To address this, the Board of Supervisors

placed Measure P on the ballot in late 2020 to clarify and augment IOLERO's authorities. County voters approved this change.

Measure P modified the original civilian oversight structure by creating a "hybrid" oversight model. Unlike other more targeted models, Measure P authorized IOLERO to conduct case-specific audits of SCSO investigations, to conduct its own investigative reviews, to serve as a receiving and investigating agency for whistleblower claims, to prepare detailed and substantive policy recommendations, and to conduct broader performance reviews of SCSO's operations at an institutional level. IOLERO also received general subpoena authority and mandatory access to SCSO records when relevant to IOLERO's oversight activities.

Due to legal challenges under state labor law, IOLERO's implementation of Measure P was placed on hold from 2020 until 2022. Accordingly, IOLERO was not able to begin establishing a self-sustaining civilian oversight program under Measure P's authorities until July 2022 when the Operational Agreement was executed with the Sheriff's Office and the Letters of Agreement were executed between the County and the officers' unions.

II. Triennial Audit of IOLERO

Measure P requires a performance audit at least once every three years to determine whether IOLERO is operating in an effective and efficient manner and is meeting best practices as a civilian oversight office as compared to other agencies with similar missions. (Measure P § 2-396).

Pivot Consulting Group was retained in early 2026 to conduct this audit and Pivot issued its Report in August 2026. The Audit covers the period **July 2022 through June 2025** and includes a comprehensive review of how each Measure P authority was implemented during that period. In conducting the Audit, Pivot reviewed publicly available IOLERO work product and interviewed IOLERO Staff, Sheriff's Office representatives, the Board of Supervisors, Sonoma County Executive Office Staff, and community members.

Pivot's Audit is being submitted to the Board of Supervisors along with this Annual Report and it can be read in full at the following link: <https://sonomacounty.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/independent-office-of-law-enforcement-review-and-outreach/triennial-review>.

The Pivot Audit found that during the period 2022-2025, IOLERO successfully implemented a civilian law enforcement oversight program under Measure P by leveraging its limited resources to focus on policy- and law-intensive audits and investigative reviews of SCSO Internal Affairs investigations and critical incidents. These included both patrol operations and detention issues at the Main Adult Detention Facility. As a result of IOLERO's targeted effort, Sonoma County now has in place an effective and self-sustaining civilian oversight program.

The Audit also found that IOLERO's delay in implementing other Measure P authorities was due to IOLERO's deliberative choices beginning in July 2022 based on practical resource constraints, and not because IOLERO lacked authority to implement those additional elements.

Moving forward, the Audit identified "opportunities" and "recommendations" for building on and augmenting IOLERO's oversight program. These can be viewed in full in the Audit, and we discuss a couple of them here.

First, the Audit notes that communications between IOLERO and SCSO were largely adequate as they concerned case-specific audits and investigations, but they were less than sufficient concerning other areas of civilian oversight including processing complaints, conferring about

the scope of investigations, cross-agency training opportunities and other programmatic issues concerning law enforcement oversight.

Second, the Audit notes that while SCSO and IOLERO worked cooperatively on audits and investigative reviews, there was nevertheless some friction between the agencies that might be alleviated through greater agency-to-agency engagement.

IOLERO agrees with the principle of reinforced engagement with SCSO. Civilian oversight works best for the community, the County and the involved agencies when issues are discussed and addressed as part of an ongoing dialogue. IOLERO has a responsibility to contribute to that dialogue in a meaningful, constructive and professional manner and IOLERO intends to meet that obligation.

These items are included in IOLERO's more detailed Statement in follow up to the Audit which is attached to this Annual Report as **EXHIBIT A**.

Moving forward, and particularly during this interim period of transition between permanent Directors, IOLERO intends to maintain the high standards and quality of its core audit and investigative review functions. At the same time, IOLERO will identify other Measure P authorities that can be implemented in a careful and deliberative manner and without sacrificing the quality of IOLERO's established oversight program. As the Audit noted, some items will require additional staff (e.g., dedicated monitoring of MADF operations), some might be achieved through informal agency dialogue (e.g., more efficient complaint processing and setting investigative parameters), while some might ultimately require structural changes.

Regardless of the level of engagement required, all should be part of the discussion when the next permanent Director is appointed.

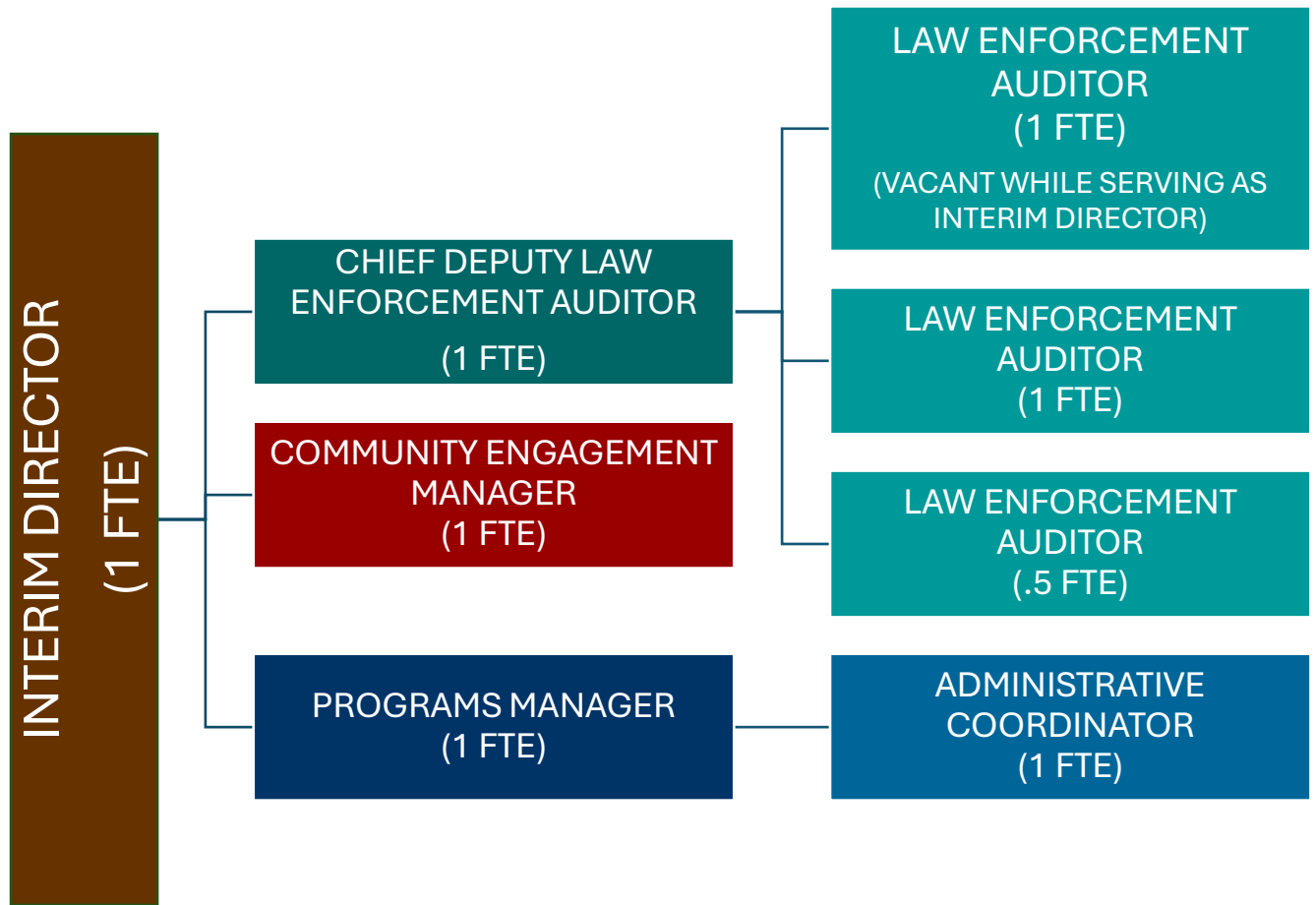
III. IOLERO'S Budget and Staffing

IOLERO entered the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year with a budget of \$2,498,546.00. This modestly surpassed the funding mandate of the equivalent of 1% of the Sheriff's Office 2025-2026 Fiscal Year budget of \$246,731,104.00, and therefore no supplemental adjustments were made to the IOLERO budget.

As of July 1, 2025, seven of IOLERO's eight permanent positions were staffed, with one recruitment in progress to fill a Law Enforcement Auditor vacancy due to a resignation in December of 2024. That vacancy was filled in August of 2025. IOLERO closed the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year with one vacancy due to the departure of the former Director. Recruitment to fill that position will take place in the 2026-2027 Fiscal Year.

Information about IOLERO's budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 can be found by viewing the County's Recommended Budget at: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/county-administrators-office/budget-and-operations/budget-reports>.

IOLERO Organizational Chart as of June 12, 2026



IV. Community Outreach and Engagement

Measure P mandates that IOLERO conduct comprehensive outreach to the community to promote and facilitate communications between the community and law enforcement, educate the community on law enforcement practices and policies, and provide feedback from the community to department leaders and elected officials. IOLERO is also mandated to provide staff and support for the Community Advisory Council (CAC).

Through its community outreach and engagement efforts, IOLERO educates the public on its services and processes for complaint intake and investigation, encourages community feedback regarding the SCSO, and invites participation in decision-making processes through service on the CAC or attendance at CAC meetings. IOLERO brings their message to the community by tabling at various events throughout the county and by making presentations to community-based organizations.

During the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year, IOLERO outreach included tabling at the Andy Lopez Memorial Celebration, Santa Rosa Wednesday Night Market, Rohnert Park Friday Night Market, 4th Annual African Soul Festival, Petaluma Dia de los Muertos, City of Rohnert Park Juneteenth Celebration, Windsor Latino Fest, Santa Rosa Junior College Social Justice Conference, Sonoma County Volunteer Fair, various Los Cien events, and at mochiladas in Roseland and Supervisorial District 5.

IOLERO staff and CAC members also attended Los Cien-sponsored charlas with elected officials at varying levels of state and county government to hear about issues that could impact the work of law enforcement oversight and to answer questions about what IOLERO and the CAC do.

To expedite the sharing of information, IOLERO increased its newsletter frequency from once to twice per month with content adapted for social media platforms.

IOLERO continues to facilitate access to services and CAC meetings by providing Spanish interpretation services to individuals with limited English proficiency and translated materials, including brochures, annual reports, and complaint forms. IOLERO also employed this language access to enable the service of the CAC's first monolingual Spanish speaking Member. IOLERO further provides the public Spanish translations of CAC meetings as needed.

IOLERO also worked with the CAC to expand its working "Ad Hoc" Committees to include interested members of the public. The CAC's Ad Hoc Committees and their work plans can be found at [https://sonomacounty.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/independent-office-of-law-enforcement-review-and-outreach/community-advisory-council-\(cac\)/cac-annual-work-plans](https://sonomacounty.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/independent-office-of-law-enforcement-review-and-outreach/community-advisory-council-(cac)/cac-annual-work-plans).

IOLERO extends its appreciation to departing CAC members Robin Jurs, Imelda Martinez De Montano, and Alberto Botello for their dedicated service and commitment to our community.

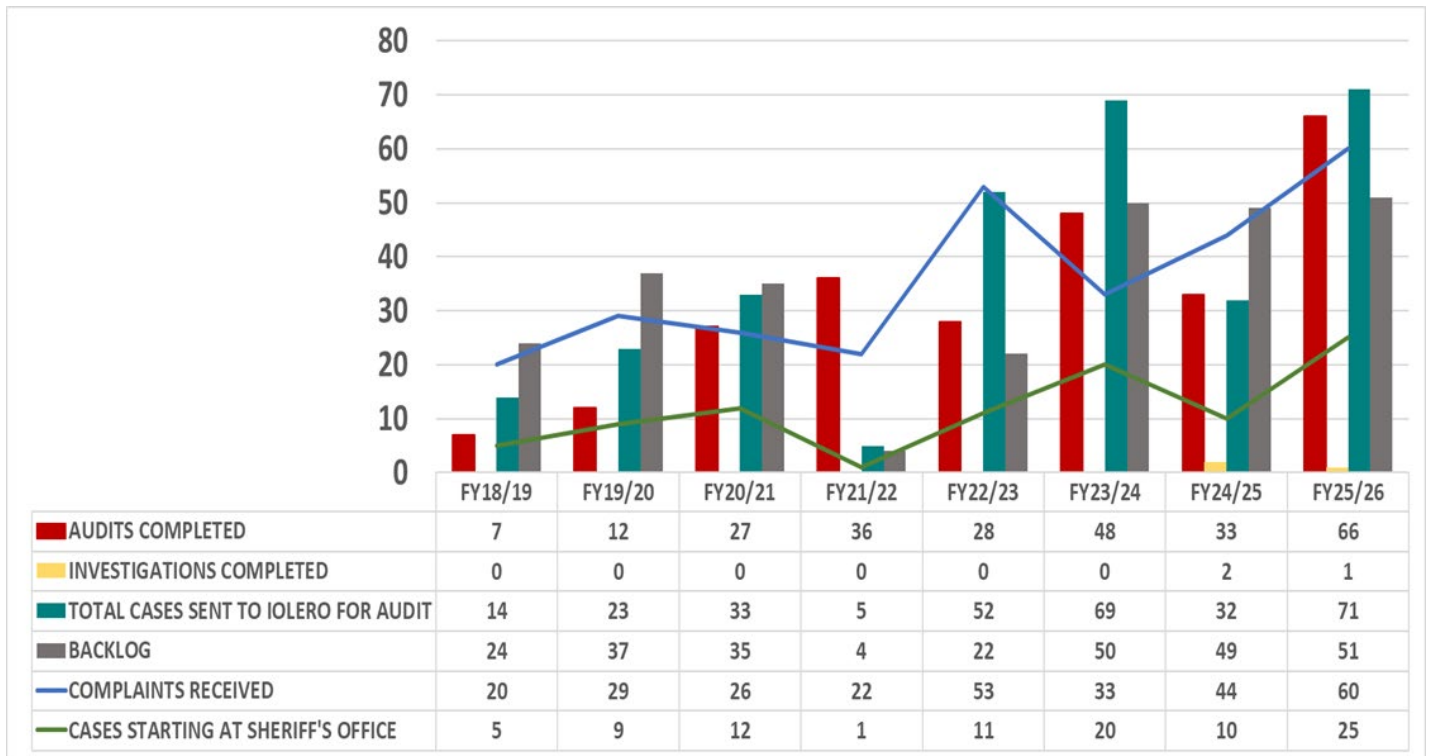
V. IOLERO's Work By the Numbers: 2025-2026

Below is a data summary of IOLERO's oversight work over the prior fiscal year.

Complaints and Audits for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

- IOLERO received 60 submissions from the public that were reviewed for possible complaint status, an increase of 12 (25%) from the prior year. Of these, 48 were identified as complaints, 6 were classified as "grievances", 3 did not involve SCSO and were forwarded to the appropriate agency, and 3 were addressed without investigation.
- IOLERO received 71 cases from SCSO for audit. This is almost double from the prior year (37). Of these, 25 (or 35%) involved complaints that originated with SCSO.
- IOLERO completed 66 audits which involved a total of 120 allegations. This is double the number from the prior year (33 audits with 69 allegations). IOLERO has been refining how it computes the number of allegations by reference to each officer involved in a matter, which results in an increased number of "allegations". This refinement has not yet been completed and the number of allegations identified here may not be a direct one-for-one comparison to past data. Nevertheless, the number of allegations has increased as a direct result of the increased number of cases reviewed. IOLERO expects to have this data computation refined by the next fiscal year to allow a direct year-over-year comparison.

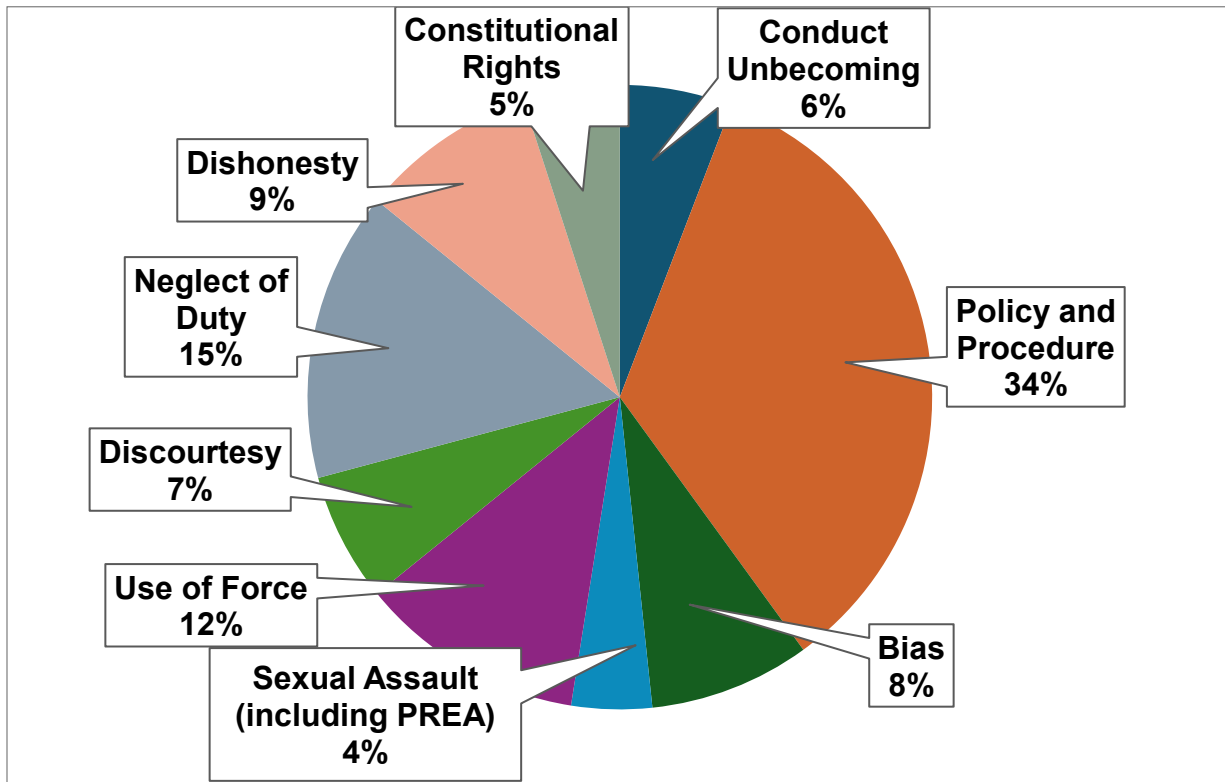
- IOLERO received 130 separate public communications and inquiries on non-complaint matters, with 126 (97%) by English speakers and 4 (3%) by Spanish speakers.



SCSO investigations that originated at SCSO and were sent to IOLERO to be audited fell into four types: Administrative Reviews (AR) self-initiated by SCSO; Internal Affairs investigations self-initiated by SCSO (IA); Policy and Procedure reviews (PP); and Citizen Complaints (C).

TYPE	NUMBER
Administrative Review (AR)	1
Internal Affairs (IA)	3
Policy and Procedure (PP)	3
Citizen Complaint (C)	18
Total cases originating at Sheriff's Office	25

A. Breakout of All Investigated Allegations by Type



Allegation	Quantity	Percent
Conduct Unbecoming	7	6%
Policy and Procedure	41	34%
Bias	10	8%
Sexual Assault (including PREA)	5	4%
Use of Force	14	12%
Discourtesy	8	7%
Neglect of Duty	18	15%
Dishonesty	11	9%
Constitutional Rights	6	5%
Total Allegations Investigated/Audited	120	

B. Race and Ethnicity of Complainants

IOLERO's complaint form asks complainants about their race or ethnicity, as well their gender and any disabilities.

We do this because complainant demographics can help IOLERO and SCSO improve processes and better understand community concerns. Analyzing this information over months or years can help us understand how different communities use the IOLERO/SCSO complaint processes; where we may be able to provide more meaningful outreach and engagement; and whether different communities have different concerns about their interactions with SCSO. This is meaningful feedback.

Of course, IOLERO complainants always have the choice *not* to provide their demographics. We also audit many investigations where the complainant was never asked for this information. For example, SCSO does not ask complainants about their race or ethnicity; and it is common for IOLERO to receive complaints that do not use IOLERO's form. As a result, each year there are gaps in the data that IOLERO receives.

This report does not try to fill in those gaps. Instead, we only report the information that complainants chose to provide during this reporting period. We also report how many complainants chose not to share their information with us (we call that "Declined to State") and how many were never asked for it (we call that "Unknown").

For this reporting period, IOLERO audited 66 investigations. The complainants' race and ethnicity broke down as follows:

- Black/African America – 1
- Hispanic/Latine(x) – 3
- Native American – 5
- White – 22
- Declined to State – 5
- Unknown – 22¹

IOLERO *never* uses this information when evaluating complaints or cases. Regardless of the complainant's race or ethnicity, IOLEROs handle all complaints and cases according to the same internal procedures. IOLERO does not treat complainants differently based on their race or ethnicity – or based on their choice to not disclose that information. IOLERO also does not make decisions based on race or ethnicity when sending complaints to SCSO or when conducting audits. The same is true when it comes to gender, disability, and complainants' other personal information.

VI. Completeness, Timeliness, And Findings In 2025-2026

A. Completeness

In each audit, IOLERO evaluates whether SCSO's investigation was "Complete" – e.g., did SCSO's investigation establish a sufficient factual and analytical record to address the

¹ IOLERO uses terminology from the Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA) to describe complainant demographics. For race and ethnicity, the RIPA categories are: Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latine(x), Middle Eastern or South Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and White. You can learn more about what these categories mean in the RIPA regulations – California Code of Regulations section 999.226. You can learn more about why IOLERO uses RIPA's terminology in our 2023-2024 Annual Report (pages 32-33).

allegations presented. “Completeness” stems from the requirement in Penal Code § 832.5, § 832.7 and § 832.8 that SCSO’s internal affairs investigation “clearly establish” a finding.

IOLERO and SCSO use a “Completeness Checklist” jointly prepared by the agencies as guidance which is included as an “Appendix” in each audit. An exemplar of this “Checklist” was also included as an appendix in IOLERO’s 2024-2025 Annual Report.

In FY 2025-2026, IOLERO used the following completeness categories:

Complete: SCSO did a complete investigation of all allegations.

Partially Incomplete: SCSO did a complete investigation of some allegations, but there was at least one allegation that was *not* sufficiently investigated.

Incomplete: All allegations were insufficiently investigated.

Of the 66 investigations audited in 2025-2026, IOLERO concluded that 60 of the investigations (or 91%) were “Complete” and 6 (9%) were “Partially Incomplete”. No SCSO investigation was found to be “Incomplete” in its entirety.

The percentage of matters found to be “Complete” (91%) is a *substantial* increase from the prior year’s 73% and continues a positive trend that began several years back. IOLERO sees this increase as the result of SCSO’s diligence and professionalism in conducting its investigations, increased communication between IOLERO and SCSO to allow for investigative corrections where possible, and IOLERO’s ongoing refinement of the completeness standard which, over time, has increasingly noted areas where an investigation can be improved rather than finding that part of the investigation “incomplete” as had been done in prior years. As noted earlier, in-depth policy reviews through the audit and investigative review mechanism are a cornerstone of the civilian oversight structure implemented by IOLERO during the 2022-2025 period. The progressively increasing alignment of investigative standards between IOLERO and SCSO over time is a direct result of this oversight process.

It is also important to note that IOLERO’s “partially incomplete” finding in the remaining 6 investigations does not mean that SCSO’s investigation was inadequate. Rather, it means that IOLERO believed that one or more specific subset of allegations was not fully investigated, while other allegations were. Some concern has been raised by SCSO concerning whether a “Partially Incomplete” finding is more appropriately viewed as a suggestion that the matter could have been investigated “better”, and not that the investigation was inadequate. The Pivot Audit identified the same issue. IOLERO acknowledges this and will be working with SCSO going forward to develop an agreed upon approach to this question.

B. Timeliness

IOLERO’s audits assess the “Timeliness” of both SCSO’s investigation and IOLERO’s audit. “Timeliness” is measured by (i) whether SCSO completed its investigation within the 12-month period required under Government Code § 3304 (the Peace Officers Bill of Rights), and (ii) by whether SCSO and IOLERO completed their respective investigations and audits within separately defined timeframes to which the agencies voluntarily agreed as a mechanism to facilitate the investigation/auditing process. These deadlines are listed in a “Timeliness Checklist” that is included as an appendix in IOLERO’s audits. The Timeliness Checklist was implemented in February 2024.

Late in this last fiscal year, IOLERO and SCSO discussed changing the “Checklist” requirement that SCSO provide IOLERO the completed investigation within 14 days after SCSO’s management finalized its review. This guideline was initially intended to facilitate SCSO’s transmittal of completed investigations to IOLERO promptly upon completion. However, several instances arose where SCSO completed its investigation promptly but its transmittal to IOLERO was delayed due to administrative issues (such as minimal administrative staffing during the holidays). Both agencies agreed that SCSO’s investigations in those matters were timely, and that failure to meet the “14-day” rule was not reflective of the diligence with which the investigations were completed. Accordingly, the agencies amended the Timeliness Checklist to require SCSO to transmit the file to IOLERO within a “reasonable amount of time” after SCSO’s management reviewed the matter and to note the reason for any delays.

There were thirteen (13) matters audited by IOLERO that were investigated by SCSO *prior* to implementation of the Timeliness Checklist. Of these SCSO met the statutory § 3304 deadline in 7 and missed it in 6.

For the remaining 53 audited matters that were subject to the Timeliness Checklist, SCSO missed the § 3304 deadline in 8 cases. SCSO met the § 3304 deadline and all of the other checklist deadlines in 38 matters (71%). Notably, IOLERO also met the checklist deadline in 38 matters (71%).

The uniformity in both agencies’ rate of compliance with the Timeliness Checklist is a reflection of the fact that both agencies are handling an increased workload under similarly limited staffing. One way in which this percentage might be increased for both agencies is through greater engagement on processing complaints and identifying the scope of investigation at the front-end of the process so audits can be more efficiently targeted at the back end. The agencies have already started this: SCSO has begun using expedited investigative processes and forms for non-complicated matters and IOLERO is auditing those investigations under appropriate auditing standards tailored to the issues identified in the expedited investigation. IOLERO expects to explore with SCSO other ways to expedite complaint intake, investigation, and auditing.

C. Findings

IOLERO agreed with SCSO’s findings in 58 of the 66 audited cases, or 88%. This is slightly higher than the 85% from the prior year and, on its own, reflects substantial agreement between the agencies on the merits of these cases.

However, it is important to note that in 7 of the 8 cases in which there was disagreement, IOLERO did *not* conclude that SCSO’s findings were incorrect on the merits; rather IOLERO concluded in 6 of these 7 matters that the record had not been sufficiently developed to reach a conclusion (the “partially incomplete” matters discussed above) and in the 7th matter IOLERO believed the completed record did not support any finding.

The 8th case, involving a search, was the *only* one in which IOLERO and SCSO remained in disagreement on the substantive merits at the end of the auditing process. On this point, SCSO correctly noted that whether a search violates the Fourth Amendment is a *legal* issue to be resolved by a court after consideration of the factual record and applicable law, and SCSO therefore believed that the need for a judicial legal determination precluded an *administrative* finding by either SCSO or IOLERO on the existing record.

Thus, of the 66 audited cases, IOLERO and SCSO disagreed on the merits in only 1 matter, or 1.5%. As with “Completeness” and “Timeliness”, the alignment between the substantive

conclusions reached by SCSO and IOLERO on the issues raised in the investigative records continues to increase. IOLERO is confident that this trend will continue.

As noted in our prior reports, IOLERO also informs SCSO as part of each audit whether IOLERO believes SCSO should use “exonerated” instead of “unfounded”, or vice versa, when both agree that the evidence did not support a claim. These “finding” labels are defined in Penal Code §§ 832.5, 832.7 and 832.8. IOLERO will continue noting this distinction in its audits.

VII. IOLERO’s Independent Investigations

A. In-Custody Deaths

IOLERO completed two independent investigative reviews of in-custody deaths in FY 2024-2025, but did not complete any independent investigative reviews during the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

Going forward IOLERO will be conducting an independent investigative review of at least one in-custody death at the MADF. IOLERO will also be investigating a law enforcement encounter and related vehicle pursuit in which the fleeing individual died. IOLERO expects these investigative reviews to be completed in FY 2026-2027.

B. Officer-Involved Shootings

IOLERO conducted an independent investigative review into the officer-involved shooting (OIS) death of David Pelaez-Chavez and this was reported in the Annual Report for FY 2024-2025. However, IOLERO’s report was not issued until this fiscal year. IOLERO’s report, and SCSO’s own report, are available for review on IOLERO’s website at <https://sonomacounty.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/independent-office-of-law-enforcement-review-and-outreach/audits-and-investigations>. Summaries of IOLERO’s investigation and related audit are also found later in this Report.

As noted in last year’s Annual Report, this investigation identified an issue regarding IOLERO’s use of subpoenas to directly interview SCSO officers. SCSO’s officers invoked their 5th Amendment right to not sit for the interviews, and SCSO took the position that it was not authorized to administratively direct its staff to sit for such interviews absent a “meet and confer” between the officers’ unions and the County. This issue is discussed in more detail in IOLERO’s Statement on the Triennial Audit (see **Exhibit A**) and remains to be addressed by the agencies going forward.

IOLERO did not complete an investigative review of any other OIS matter in FY 2025-2026.

C. Whistleblower Complaints

IOLERO has received three whistleblower complaints. IOLERO moved to investigate the first claim through the issuance of a subpoena to SCSO which SCSO and the officers’ unions challenged as beyond IOLERO’s authority. The matter was litigated and a California Court of Appeal ruled that IOLERO does have authority to issue such subpoenas. See *IOLERO v. Sonoma County Sheriff’s Office*, 119 Cal.App.5th 668 (1st Dist. 2026).

The whistleblower claims have been in abeyance pending this court ruling. Now that the court has clarified IOLERO’s authority, IOLERO will be moving forward to complete those investigations and SCSO has committed to complying with the subpoenas.

D. Other Incidents Involving Law Enforcement

IOLERO is conducting an independent investigative review of a fatal traffic collision involving an SCSO officer, which IOLERO expects to be concluded during FY 2026-2027.

VIII. Issues / Topical Observations For 2025-2026

In addition to assessing SCSO's institutional performance, IOLERO's audits and investigations are designed to bridge the information gap between law enforcement and the community. Accordingly, as in our past Reports, we have identified some substantive issues for extended discussion here.

A. Mental Health

IOLERO continues to monitor the presence and impact of mental health issues both during law enforcement interactions and within the Main Adult Detention Facility (MADF).

We focus here on only **three** of the many ways in which this issue manifests itself.

First, law enforcement may encounter an individual in the field who is experiencing a mental health crisis. The County has a mental health unit, including a Mobile Support Team (MST), to respond to such incidents, and SCSO's policies provide for law enforcement to defer to mental health intervention in appropriate cases. <https://sonomacounty.gov/health-and-human-services/health-services/divisions/behavioral-health/services/crisis-services/mobile-crisis-services>. However, there are limits to law enforcement disengagement such as where a serious crime has been committed, the public safety is jeopardized, or the law requires law enforcement intervention.

This past year IOLERO reviewed a matter that involved a person experiencing mental health issues. SCSO handled the matter as a law enforcement issue because there was probable cause showing the individual committed a serious crime. IOLERO agreed that SCSO was compelled to handle the matter as a law enforcement issue on the facts of the case. We also noted – as we do here – that law enforcement is presented with considerable practical and legal challenges that limit its options when addressing mental health as part of the law enforcement function. There is much more to do on a broader social and governmental basis to shrink the number of circumstances that bring persons suffering mental health issues into contact with law enforcement in the first instance.

Second, local county jails across the nation have collectively become one of the largest *de facto* providers of health care, including mental health care. The percentage of the jail population exhibiting mental health issues has grown in recent years and continues to climb.

A February 2020 analysis of data compiled by the California Board of State and Community Corrections showed that from 2009 through 2019, the total number of mental health cases across all California local jails increased by 42% and the proportion of total inmates with an active mental health case increased 63%. See California Health Policy Strategies, LLC, *The Prevalence of Mental Illness in California Jails is Rising: An Analysis of Mental Health Cases & Psychotropic Medication Prescriptions, 2009-2019* (Feb. 2020).

In 2019, Sonoma County exceeded the statewide median of 32% for active mental health cases as a share of the jail's overall Average Daily Population (ADP), with SCSO reporting 48%. For inmates receiving psychotropic medication, Sonoma County was above the statewide median of approximately 23% of the ADP, reporting 39% for 2019. (Id. at 7–8, Figures 3a & 3b).

Data also showed the MADF's percentage of open mental health cases increased from 25% in 2009 to 50% in 2019, and the percentage of psychotropic medication increased from 23% in 2009 to 38% in 2019. (Id. at 10, Figs. 4a & 4b).

SCSO's Annual Report for 2024-2025 showed this trend to be stabilizing but at a persistently high level: approximately 48% of incarcerated persons were living with mental illness, with an average of 360 persons with ongoing mental health issues, 110 of whom had a "severe" mental health issue. (SCSO Annual Report 2024-2025 at 13). This is on par with 2022-2023 (approximately 49% of incarcerated persons live with mental illness with 32% of that group experiencing "serious" mental illness) (SCSO Annual Report 2022-2023 at 15) and with 2021-2022 (48% of inmates with "mental health diagnosis") (SCSO Annual Report 2021-2022 at 7).

Thus, SCSO is presented with a daunting task. Jails are required by the U.S. Constitution and state regulations to provide medical and mental health care to incarcerated persons who must be monitored within the facility, and they may require specialized housing for safety and security purposes. SCSO and its contracted medical provider, Wellpath, are also required to comply with the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) standards under which the MADF has received NCCHC certification. Reviewing the *clinical sufficiency* of medical/mental health care is beyond IOLERO's expertise and resources. However, IOLERO can and does review *access* to care at the MADF through its audits and investigative reviews. This past year IOLERO reviewed medical/mental health access issues at the MADF and found no violations in the case-specific matters that were subject to audit. IOLERO will continue to monitor access to mental health care.

Third, mental health issues can play a significant role when a person submits a complaint of misconduct against SCSO or a third party. In such instances, the person may be the subject of an assault or other misconduct but, due to a mental health issue, they are unable to articulate clearly what occurred. Indeed, persons with mental health issues are at higher risk of sexual assault in jails because perpetrators may believe the victim will not be taken seriously by investigators due to this limit on articulation. To protect against discounting such claims, investigations conducted under the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) must independently review the factual circumstances surrounding a claim, even (and especially) where the individual is experiencing a mental health issue. IOLERO found that SCSO conducted the required investigation in the PREA matters we reviewed this past year, and overall SCSO handles PREA claims thoroughly and with mental health in mind.

The resolution of non-PREA claims marked by mental health issues in a patrol environment presents separate complications. Unlike the jail (where all staff are SCSO employees or SCSO contractors), the community has multiple law enforcement agencies at work (SCSO, Santa Rosa Police, California Highway Patrol, etc.). Sometimes a person may not know specifically which law enforcement agency is involved in an incident. Coupled with an inability to articulate the facts, a person experiencing a mental health issue might also be unable to identify the agency involved. This presents a challenge for SCSO and IOLERO when processing complaints containing allegations or facts that are difficult to unravel.

IOLERO and SCSO have been working together to identify a solution to this issue through collaborative review of such complaints up-front. IOLERO will continue this engagement with SCSO. In the meantime, a preliminary investigation (which can be as short as a review of records to determine if there was any law enforcement encounter at all) is necessary to determine whether the complaint has a factual basis; if it does, more detailed investigation is required.

B. Personal Conduct

County and SCSO policy specify that personal conduct of an employee could give rise to employment discipline, up to and including termination. Examples are “conduct unbecoming” and conduct which brings “discredit” to the County or SCSO. These standards are found in the policies of many public agencies.

The terms “conduct unbecoming” and “discredit” are not simply descriptive; they are legal terms. In the law enforcement context, “conduct unbecoming” is conduct that objectively undermines the officer’s ability to credibly carrying out the essential functions of a peace officer. An example is violating the criminal laws that the officer has sworn to uphold.

Moreover, conduct bringing “discredit” to the agency does not mean any conduct with which an employing agency disagrees. Rather, it encompasses conduct that (i) has a “nexus” or relationship to the employee’s job duties and the agency’s public mission, and (ii) could reasonably be viewed by the employer as reflecting poorly on the agency. Working within these boundaries, agencies (including law enforcement) have significant latitude to define the conduct that “discredits” the agency in light of the agency’s public mission.

In its audits, IOLERO has noted that the “discredit” standard does not require the public to have actual knowledge of the misconduct. In IOLERO’s reading of the standard, it applies to any qualifying conduct of which the employing agency becomes aware. Once the agency is apprised of the discrediting conduct, it has authority to investigate and issue administrative findings and to discipline the employee regardless of whether the public ever knows of the misconduct.

In short, whether the conduct “discredits” the agency is a matter to be determined in the first instance by how the agency itself views the conduct and its compatibility with the agency’s view of its public mission. IOLERO applies this standard when reviewing SCSO’s investigations and reports its findings with this in mind.

This past year SCSO investigated a matter involving misconduct by a correctional deputy which included “personal conduct” that occurred while off-duty. (Much of the conduct was also committed while on-duty, but this discussion addresses only “off-duty” actions). SCSO applied the “discredit” standard and concluded that the personal conduct brought discredit to the agency and the County. We agreed that the off-duty conduct met the discredit standard and we noted that SCSO took this conduct very seriously and took prompt and thorough action to address it.

SCSO has applied the same level of seriousness to “discrediting” conduct in other matters, reflecting SCSO’s acknowledgment of the importance of this issue.

C. Use of Force – Pointing or Displaying Firearm

Questions have been raised generally in the United States about when it was appropriate for law enforcement to either display or point their firearm at a person. This issue was presented, in part, several years back in 20-IA-0006 where a deputy held a service firearm to the head of a person being detained. SCSO’s investigation and IOLERO’s audit conducted in that matter can be reviewed on IOLERO’s website.

IOLERO was not presented with that same factual scenario in this last fiscal year, but we had occasion to address the broader issue of when it is appropriate for law enforcement to display or point their firearm.

Displaying or pointing a weapon, by itself, carries unique concerns regarding the fear and apprehension experienced by the person at whom the weapon is displayed or pointed. The reasonableness of displaying or pointing a firearm is largely intertwined with the same facts

used in assessing “use of force”: the level of a person’s resistance, whether there was reasonable belief the person could be armed, and the safety risks the person was reasonably perceived to have presented to officers and the public. *Medranos v. Acosta*, 2024 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 200000 at *14–15 (C.D. Cal. Mar. 19, 2024), citing *Espinoza v. City and Cnty. of San Francisco*, 598 F.3d 528, 537 (9th Cir. 2010).

As part of the “use of force” analysis, there is an important distinction between displaying or pointing a weapon at a person from a distance (which is less likely to be deemed excessive) and pointing a weapon at a person’s head from close range (which courts view with significant doubt). See *Robinson v. Solano County*, 278 F.3d 1007 (9th Cir. 2002) (weapon pointed at head from few feet away but no indication person was armed or presented danger and crime under investigation was misdemeanor); *Tekle v. United States*, 511 F.3d 839 (9th Cir. 2005) (teen held by law enforcement with gun at head where no indication teen was involved in any crime and no indication they presented a threat, and gun pointed at teen throughout detention); *Jackson v. City of Los Angeles*, 2020 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 261498 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 5, 2020) (“Pointing a gun slightly to the left of a person from 30 feet is very different than ‘thrust[ing] [a] gun three or four feet from [plaintiff’s] head,’ which is what happened in [Robinson]”).

There is also a distinction between pointing a weapon during an investigatory detention based solely on “reasonable suspicion” (which is more likely to be deemed excessive) versus during an arrest on a warrant or probable cause (where pointing a weapon is on firmer ground). See *Corona v. City of Fontana*, 2024 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 176037 (C.D. Cal. Sept. 26, 2024) (distinguishing between pointing firearm during detention on reasonable suspicion and during probable cause arrest).

In short, pointing a weapon at a person reasonably perceived by the officer as presenting a threat would generally be reasonable under the Fourth Amendment. But it would not be reasonable to point a weapon directly at a person’s head at close range or point a weapon at a person where there is no objective basis to believe that a person could be armed or presents a danger to officers, or where the person is already handcuffed. *Tekle v. United States*, 511 F.3d 839 (9th Cir. 2005); *Knight v. Durbin*, 2019 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 115445 (D. Or. July 11, 2019). See also *Merrill v. Schell*, 279 F.Supp.3d 438, 447–48 (W.D.N.Y. 2017) (collecting authorities) (pointing weapon at person not presenting danger could be excessive force; initial pointing of weapon may be reasonable, but continued pointing after threat is ended may not be reasonable).

Given the apprehension experienced by persons when a weapon is pointed at them, California law requires law enforcement agencies to provide policy guidelines “regarding situations in which officers may or may not draw a firearm or point a firearm at a person.” Gov’t Code § 7286(b)(5).

In accordance with § 7286(b)(5), SCSO Policy § 300.4.2 provides that deputies “should carefully evaluate each tactical situation and use sound discretion when drawing a firearm in public by considering the following guidelines:

- (a) If the deputy does not initially perceive a threat but reasonably believes that the potential for such threat exists, firearms should generally be kept in the low-ready [meaning pointing at the ground but ready to be used] or other position not directed toward an individual.
- (b) If the deputy reasonably believes that a threat exists based on the totality of circumstances presented at the time (e.g., high-risk stop, tactical entry, armed encounter), firearms may be directed toward such threat until the deputy no longer perceives such threat.

Once it is reasonably safe to do so, deputies should carefully secure all firearms.

SCSO Policy § 300.5.1 further requires that all uses of force shall be reported to a supervisor, including “All incidents where a firearm is directly pointed at a person to gain compliance.”

We reviewed one matter this past year in which deputies pointed their service firearm generally at a person from a distance while an arrest was being made. We agreed with SCSO that the firearm use complied with law and policy and was otherwise an appropriate safety measure under the circumstances.

IOLERO will continue to monitor the display and pointing of firearms. Moreover, the broader question of how many times officers displayed their firearm may be amenable to the type of quantitative review that the Triennial Audit identified as one of the areas in which IOLERO may augment its oversight program under Measure P.

D. Use of Force – Tear Gas

We reviewed one matter this past year involving the use of CS gas (commonly referred to as “tear gas”) when a person barricaded themselves inside a residence.

Tear gas causes temporary burning and tearing of the eyes, stinging skin, nasal irritation and coughing (among other effects). Generally, persons exposed to the gas instinctively seek to get away from it, making the product effective (although not foolproof) in forcing a person to leave an enclosed structure where entry by law enforcement into the structure would entail a high risk of injury to the officers and the subject. Formulas are set for how much tear gas may be used within an enclosed structure without presenting a significant risk of harm to the subject.

Using tear gas also damages property. Generally, it is introduced into a building through canisters shot through a window or door, which damages the structure. The gas itself will also settle on the interior surfaces of the property and can continue to cause irritation to occupants long after the incident unless the property is professionally cleaned at significant cost. Some items cannot be decontaminated and must be discarded. Homeowners and business insurance usually does not cover such losses, and local governments are generally immune from liability for such damage, leaving the homeowner or business owner without recourse.

Courts have found that the Fourth Amendment requires compensation for property damage only where the force was “unnecessarily destructive” or gratuitous. Some courts have suggested that property damage could be compensated under the Fifth Amendment in limited circumstances but that has not been approved by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Accordingly, the general result is that damage caused to a home or business by tear gas is not compensable, if the use of tear gas was otherwise reasonable as a use of force, unless the local government voluntarily agrees to pay.

IOLERO agreed with SCSO’s conclusion that use of tear gas in the one matter complied with law and policy and with use of force standards. Nevertheless, we noted the damage caused by tear gas and highlighted these issues for SCSO to consider in connection with using tear gas during barricade situations in the future. IOLERO will continue to monitor this issue.

E. Immigration Enforcement

IOLERO reviewed one matter involving interactions between MADF staff and federal immigration officials. This issue is complicated and is the subject of intense public discussion. In reviewing this issue, IOLERO found that an SCSO employee informally provided information to a federal official, but that there was no intention to assist federal immigration enforcement

and it was due to a lack of training. SCSO agreed with this assessment and committed to providing additional training to its personnel as needed.

F. Compliance With SB 1421, SB 16 (Penal Code § 832.7(b))

As noted in prior IOLERO annual reports, California law requires public access to certain law enforcement records. These include incidents where a deputy fires a gun at someone, uses force that causes death or serious injury, or is found to have used unreasonable or excessive force. Records must also be released if a deputy fails to intervene to stop another deputy's excessive force.

The law also makes public any sustained finding that a deputy committed sexual assault involving a member of the public, was dishonest in reporting or investigating crimes or misconduct, engaged in discriminatory conduct based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or other protected status, or carried out an unlawful arrest or search.

IOLERO posts on its website Audits and Investigations that are publicly reportable.

<https://sonomacounty.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/independent-office-of-law-enforcement-review-and-outreach/audits-and-investigations>.

SCSO also posts public materials on its website. <https://www.sonomasheriff.org/sb1421>.

IOLERO continues to review audits and investigations to determine if they are publicly reportable and will post those matters to its website as they are identified. Publicly reportable materials from prior years continue to be available on the IOLERO and SCSO web pages.

IX. Cases Audited By IOLERO

A. SCSO Administrative Reviews (ARs)

SCSO Area: Patrol

Case Number: 22-AR-0002

Related IOLERO Independent Investigation: 22-INV-0001

Origin of Investigation/Complaint: SCSO initiated an Administrative Review investigation into the shooting death of David Peláez Chavez. IOLERO audited SCSO's Administrative Review, in addition to conducting its own independent investigation.

Type of Investigation: Administrative Review

Race or Ethnicity of the Decedent: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: An SCSO deputy shot Mr. Peláez Chavez in July 2022, and Mr. Peláez Chavez died from his gunshot wounds. SCSO's Administrative Review examined the overall performance of the Sheriff's Office during the incident, to determine whether there were particular areas where the department did or did not perform in a reasonable manner. SCSO examined policies regarding use of force, handcuffing and restraints, taser use, officer-involved shootings and deaths (including the county critical incident protocol), media relations, major incident notifications, critical incident debriefing/defusing, patrol functions, body-worn cameras ("BWCs"), and medical aid and response.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed substantial evidence for its Administrative Review, including BWC footage, criminal interviews, records from criminal investigators and the coroner, and its own records from the incident. According to its general practice during Administrative Reviews, SCSO didn't conduct its own interviews.

SCSO concluded that there were **No Violations** of policy during this incident. SCSO's report is available on their website, under the 2022 case labeled SO220729-008: <https://www.sonomasheriff.org/sb1421>

Use of Force policy: SCSO considered the totality of the circumstances, and concluded that the shooting deputy reasonably believed that Mr. Peláez Chavez was attempting to use lethal force against him, and responded with proportional force. Some of the factors that SCSO considered include Mr. Peláez Chavez's earlier actions, the shooting deputy's perceptions about the rock Mr. Peláez Chavez was holding and his intention to throw the rock at the shooting deputy, the unavailability of additional resources, and the deputies' de-escalation efforts (including the shooting deputy's decision not to shoot Mr. Peláez Chavez at an earlier point in the incident). SCSO also examined the other deputy's decision to tase Mr. Peláez Chavez, and concluded that this use of force was reasonable based on many of the same factors.

Other policies: SCSO concluded that (1) the deputies' general response to the incident was consistent with patrol functions (e.g., responding to calls and apprehending criminal offenders); (2) the deputies activated and deactivated their BWCs at appropriate times; (3) the cover deputy followed taser policy; (4) it was appropriate for the deputies to handcuff Mr. Peláez Chavez after the shooting; (5) the deputies attempted lifesaving measures consistent with policy; (6) SCSO personnel notified the appropriate individuals after the shooting; (7) SCSO conducted the required stress debriefing after the shooting; (8) SCSO properly invoked the Critical Incident Protocol; (9) SCSO's critical incident video was a good faith effort to advise the community; and (10) the criminal investigation and death reporting were handled in accordance with the Critical Incident Policy. The Administrative Review also resulted in one recommendation: that SCSO ensure all policy parameters are met before releasing informational videos to the public.

IOLERO's Conclusion: IOLERO concluded that the overall scope of the Administrative Review was too narrow, and that it was therefore **PARTIALLY INCOMPLETE**. Among other things, we noted that SCSO didn't examine the foot pursuit policy or possible supervision failures; and didn't address potential violations of three policies it did examine (officer-involved shootings, BWC, and tasers). We also concluded that SCSO should have conducted its own interviews in order to address outstanding questions and issues that weren't discussed in the criminal investigation or a related civil lawsuit.

Because of the completeness issues, we also **DISAGREED** with SCSO's finding that there was **No Violation** of policies related to use of force, taser use, officer-involved shootings, media relations, and BWCs.² We concluded that the incomplete record meant that we could reach **No Finding** on whether personnel violated these policies. On the other hand, we **AGREED** with SCSO's finding of **No Violation** on policies related to handcuffing and restraints, major incident notifications, critical incident defusing/debriefing, patrol functions, and medical aid and response. We also **AGREED** with SCSO's single recommendation.

Our report is available on our website: <https://sonomacounty.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/independent-office-of-law-enforcement-review-and-outreach/audits-and-investigations>

² We did agree with SCSO's conclusion that the taser usage didn't violate policy. However, SCSO combined this conclusion into an overall conclusion that there was no violation of force policy (including the shooting and de-escalation), which we disagreed with.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None

SCSO Area: Patrol

Case Number: 22-AR-0003

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: SCSO

Type of Investigation: Administrative Review

Race or Ethnicity of Force Subject: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: SCSO initiated an Administrative Review into the non-fatal shooting of Nathan Smart. SCSO's Administrative Review examined the overall performance of the Sheriff's Office during the incident to determine whether there were particular areas where the department did or did not perform in a reasonable manner. SCSO examined policies regarding use of force, officer-involved shootings and deaths (including the county critical incident protocol), media relations, major incident notifications, critical incident debriefing/defusing, and medical aid and response.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed substantial evidence for its Administrative Review, including BWC footage, criminal interviews, records from criminal investigators, and its own records from the incident. According to its general practice during Administrative Reviews, SCSO did not conduct its own interviews.

SCSO concluded that there were **No Violations** of policy during this incident. SCSO's report is available on their website, under the 2022 case labeled SO220000538: <https://www.sonomasheriff.org/sb1421>

SCSO recommended that the Firearms Program be reminded to keep accurate records.

IOLERO's Preliminary Conclusion: We concluded that the Administrative Review was **PARTIALLY INCOMPLETE** because it was too narrow in scope, omitting multiple issues and neglecting to review all relevant policies (handcuffing and restraints, patrol function, and body worn camera and audio recorders), it did not include deputy interviews, and it relied too heavily on the criminal investigation in the use of force analysis.

Because of the completeness issues, we **DISAGREED** with SCSO's conclusion that there was **NO VIOLATION** of the use of force policy and concluded that SCSO did not have sufficient information to reach a finding. We **AGREED** with SCSO's conclusion that there was **NO VIOLATION** of policies related to officer-involved shootings and deaths, media relations, major incident notifications, critical incident debriefing/defusing, and medical aid and response. We also **AGREED** with SCSO's single recommendation.

Our report is available on our website: <https://sonomacounty.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/independent-office-of-law-enforcement-review-and-outreach/audits-and-investigations>

This Administrative Review predated our timeliness standards.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: SCSO provided a response to our Preliminary Audit within the agreed-upon timeframe. The response included a supplemental analysis of policies relating to

handcuffing and restraints, patrol function, and body worn camera and audio recorders, finding **No Violation** of those policies.

IOLERO's Final Conclusion: Based upon SCSO's response, we modified our Preliminary Audit and **AGREED** with SCSO's conclusion that there was **NO VIOLATION** of policies related to handcuffing and restraints, patrol function, and body worn camera and audio recorders.

We reaffirmed our preliminary conclusions that SCSO's Administrative Review was **PARTIALLY INCOMPLETE** and that we **DISAGREED** with SCSO's conclusion that there was **NO VIOLATION** of the use of force policy. We noted that our audit did not identify any obvious policy violations and that a more complete and thorough Administrative Review may well have shown that deputies acted within policy.

SCSO Area: Detention

Case Number: 18-AR-0002; 25-C-0037

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: SCSO/IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Administrative Review / Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Force Subject: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: SCSO conducted an Administrative Review into the in-custody death of a person in 2018. In 2025, decedent's father submitted a complaint requesting a general re-evaluation of SCSO's 2018 Administrative Review and specifically identifying concerns about the lack of internal video during the incident.

SCSO's Conclusion: At IOLERO's request, SCSO treated the complaint about the 2018 Administrative Review as a new "complaint". SCSO assigned a new case number and on review of the original AR Report re-affirmed that it **Noted No Policy Violations** as part of the in-custody death review.

IOLERO's Preliminary Conclusion: We concluded that SCSO's review of the 2018 Administrative Review in response to the new complaint was appropriate under the unique circumstances presented. Statutory completeness standards did not apply to the 2018 investigation. However, we separately concluded that SCSO's 2025 investigation on the separate complaint was **COMPLETE**. We also concluded that SCSO's 2025 investigation, and IOLERO's audit, were **TIMELY**.

On the merits, IOLERO conducted a detailed review of the 2018 Administrative Review and accompanying record concerning decedent's arrest, booking at the MADF, medical screening and related constitutional requirements, MADF safety checks, SCSO's response to decedent's medical emergency, and the resulting SCSO investigation into the decedent's death. We **AGREED** with SCSO that **NO POLICY VIOLATIONS** were noted on this record. The facts showed decedent had a history of substance abuse that led to a medical emergency shortly after his arrival at the MADF, that MADF staff generally followed required protocols and reacted with speed to the medical emergency, and that the lack of surveillance video was reviewed in 2018 and found to have been the result of policies that required activation only after an event had occurred, a policy which has since been changed. Thus, there was no evidence of non-transparency in the circumstances of decedent's death or SCSO's Administrative Review.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

B. Investigations Initiated Without a Citizen Complaint (IAs, PPs)

SCSO Area: Detention

Case Number: 25-IA-0005

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: SCSO

Type of Investigation: Internal Affairs Investigation

Race or Ethnicity of Subject: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: SCSO self-initiated an internal investigation to determine whether a correctional deputy had (i) engaged in an improper personal relationship with Inmate A and (ii) engaged in illicit sexual contact with Inmate B.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO became aware of facts suggesting a correctional deputy had an improper personal relationship with Inmate A when they were incarcerated at the MADF and after their release. SCSO's investigation was prompt, thorough and detailed, and it uncovered additional acts suggesting the correctional deputy could have had a relationship with another Inmate B and otherwise violated internal MADF policy and procedures. The deputy resigned prior to conclusion of the investigation and declined to provide an interview, and SCSO completed the investigation as required by law. SCSO found no evidence that the deputy had physical sexual contact with Inmate A while they were incarcerated (**Not Sustained**), but evidence showed an inappropriate personal relationship with Inmate A, resulting in a **Sustained** finding for violating SCSO policies concerning conduct unbecoming and discrediting SCSO. SCSO also found the evidence inconclusive as to whether the deputy had sexual contact with Inmate B and concluded the finding should be **Not Sustained**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that SCSO's investigation was **COMPLETE** and **TIMELY** and that IOLERO's audit was **TIMELY**. On the merits, we **AGREE** with SCSO that the evidence showed the deputy had an improper personal relationship with Inmate A while they were incarcerated in the MADF and after they were released from custody, in violation of law and policy, and that the finding on discredit and conduct unbecoming should be **SUSTAINED**, but the evidence was inconclusive as to whether the deputy had sexual contact with Inmate A while they were incarcerated, supporting a finding of **NOT SUSTAINED**. We **DISAGREED** with SCSO on the **NOT SUSTAINED** finding with respect to sexual contact with Inmate B, because we interpreted the record evidence as supporting (but not necessarily requiring) a **SUSTAINED** finding. Finally, we opined that the record also supported **SUSTAINED** findings of violating policies concerning creating accurate reports, barring disgraceful and/or dishonest conduct, and requiring "serious misconduct" be reported to the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: SCSO provided a written response changing its finding on the issue of whether the deputy had sexual contact with Inmate B from **Not Sustained** to **Sustained** in agreement with IOLERO's audit and confirming that the investigative findings had been reported to POST for review on the deputy's peace officer certification.

SCSO Area: Patrol

Case Number: 22-IA-0008

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: SCSO

Type of Investigation: Internal Affairs Investigation

Race or Ethnicity of the Use of Force Subject: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: A newly hired deputy engaged in a disturbance with civilians while off-duty which included the deputy's threats of force and physical contact by the deputy with a citizen. During its investigation SCSO also found the deputy improperly stored his service firearm and made false statements to SCSO.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed relevant video and documents and interviewed the deputy. Based on this record, SCSO made **Sustained** findings that the deputy violated law and SCSO policy and brought discredit to SCSO. SCSO terminated the deputy's employment for cause.

IOLERO's Conclusion: This matter was a legacy case from 2022. We found the investigation was **COMPLETE** and we **AGREED** with SCSO's findings and its decision to terminate the deputy's employment. This matter arose prior to the use of the Timeliness Checklist, but the matter was investigated within the statutory 12-month period.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-PP-0010

Origin of Investigation: SCSO

Type of Investigation: Policy/Procedure

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: SCSO opened this Investigation when a member of SCSO reported that a deputy assigned as a Field Training Officer (FTO) demonstrated a pattern of unsatisfactory conduct and efficiency and violated department policy and procedures.

The reporting member alleged that the deputy failed to properly investigate a domestic violence restraining order violation, failed to establish probable cause to make an arrest, and improperly allowed a juvenile to be transported by a parent to the hospital for a mental health hold. The supervisor also alleged that the deputy failed to complete required documentation and incident reports in a timely manner.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed the reporting member's memorandum, incident reports, BWC recordings, dispatch records and daily observation reports. SCSO interviewed the involved deputy and a witness deputy.

SCSO determined that the involved deputy reasonably utilized discretion when investigating a domestic violence restraining order violation and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO determined that the involved deputy falsely arrested a person after failing to establish probable cause to make the arrest and reached a finding of **Sustained**. SCSO determined that the

decision to allow a juvenile's parent to transport the juvenile to the hospital for a mental health hold was reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances and de-escalated the situation. SCSO found that the involved deputy appropriately utilized discretion in the matter and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO determined that the involved deputy failed to complete required documentation in a timely manner and did not provide a legitimate justification for the delays. SCSO concluded that the involved deputy demonstrated unsatisfactory work performance and reached a finding of **Sustained**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** and **TIMELY**. Our audit was also **TIMELY**.

We **AGREED** with SCSO that the involved deputy reasonably utilized discretion when investigating a domestic violence restraining order violation and that the finding should be **EXONERATED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the involved deputy failed to sufficiently establish probable cause to arrest a person and that the finding should be **SUSTAINED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the involved deputy reasonably utilized discretion when allowing a juvenile's parent to transport the juvenile to the hospital for a mental health hold and that the finding should be **EXONERATED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the involved deputy failed to complete required documentation in a timely manner and demonstrated unsatisfactory work performance and that the finding should be **SUSTAINED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

SCSO Area: Detention

Case Number: 25-PP-0003

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: SCSO

Type of Investigation: Policy/Procedure

Race or Ethnicity of the Use of Force Subject: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: SCSO initiated this investigation based on IOLERO's request for further investigation in Case 24-IA-0002. (See our 2024-2025 Annual Report for a summary of Case 24-IA-0002.) In Case 25-PP-0003, SCSO investigated whether a deputy used appropriate force and de-escalation techniques when they did a takedown on an incarcerated person (the "Person") in the jail.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed BWC and jail camera footage; incident reports; medical records; photos; interviews and IA/IOLERO reports from Case 24-IA-0002; training materials; and reports from other incidents. SCSO also conducted several new interviews (including the deputy) and asked a subject matter expert to evaluate the deputy's conduct.

SCSO **Exonerated** both allegations – de-escalation and force. SCSO concluded that the deputy tried to de-escalate (among other things, by giving commands, requesting backup, and trying other methods before the takedown), but that de-escalation attempt eventually became unreasonable and unsafe; and noted obstacles to de-escalation, including the backup deputies' experience level and the Person's behavior. SCSO also concluded that the takedown was reasonable. Among other things, SCSO noted the deputy's comparative size and proximity to the Person, the Person's behavior before and after the takedown, the deputy's training, and unrelated incidents involving the Person.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE** and **TIMELY**, and that our audit was **NOT TIMELY**. We **AGREED** with SCSO's finding on de-escalation (**EXONERATED**), for reasons similar to the ones SCSO presented. We also **AGREED** with SCSO's finding on force (**EXONERATED**). In reaching this conclusion, we noted that SCSO should have excluded some evidence from its force analysis (specifically, they should not have considered information that the deputy did not have at the time), but that the remaining evidence showed that the takedown was reasonable.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 23-PP-0012

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: SCSO

Type of Investigation: Policy/Procedure

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: SCSO opened this Investigation when a member of SCSO reported that a sergeant had misused sick leave. SCSO reviewed whether the sergeant misused sick leave and falsified a timecard in violation of SCSO policy.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed the reporting member's memorandum, the sergeant's payroll and timecard records, and email correspondence from the sergeant. SCSO interviewed the sergeant and four witness lieutenants.

SCSO determined that the sergeant misused sick leave while on vacation in violation of SCSO policy and reached a finding of **Sustained**. SCSO determined that the sergeant falsified a timecard in violation of SCSO policy and reached a finding of **Sustained**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE**.

We **AGREED** with SCSO that the sergeant misused sick leave and that the finding should be **Sustained**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the sergeant falsified a timecard and that the finding should be **SUSTAINED**.

This Investigation predated our timeliness standards.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

C. Citizen Complaints

1. MADF

Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)

SCSO Area: Detention

Case Number: 2024-000239

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: SCSO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that correctional deputies sexually harassed him in violation of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA).

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed the complainant's grievance, incident reports, movement and classification history, a door activity report, surveillance video, shift logs and a correctional deputy's proxy activity during the month of the alleged incident. SCSO interviewed the complainant and five correctional deputies.

SCSO determined that no correctional deputies interacted with the complainant and the complainant's cell door was not opened during the date and timeframe alleged. SCSO concluded that there was no evidence suggesting that a crime had occurred or that correctional deputies violated PREA or SCSO policy and reached a finding of **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** and **NOT TIMELY**. Our audit was **TIMELY**.

We **AGREED** with SCSO that there was no evidence that correctional deputies violated PREA or SCSO policy, and that the findings should be **UNFOUNDED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 2024-000307

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: SCSO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that a correctional deputy had taken a picture of him and made a sexually suggestive gesture while he was in a Safety Cell.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO interviewed the complainant, reviewed internal video files, booking records and incident reports, classification records and management notes. The evidence affirmatively showed SCSO personnel conducted routine checks on complainant in

the Safety Cell and none took a photograph or made a sexually suggestive gesture. Accordingly, SCSO determined the claim to be **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** and **TIMELY**, and our audit was **UNTIMELY**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the evidence affirmatively showed that no correctional deputy took a photograph or made any gesture to complainant that was in any way sexually suggestive, and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0009

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: SCSO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that a correctional deputy engaged in sexual misconduct with inmates.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO conducted a criminal PREA review and followed with an administrative review of the incident reports, shift logs, OCA logs, door reports, BWC files, management notes and other custody records, and an interview with complainant, the subject deputy and other inmate witnesses. The evidence showed no inappropriate actions by the deputy, complainant's factual allegations were inconsistent, and a witness stated that complainant made a PREA allegation against the deputy in retaliation for a rule enforcement. Based on this SCSO concluded the claim of sexual contact between a deputy and an inmate was **Unfounded**. With respect to sexual harassment, SCSO found that the deputy's directive for female inmates to wear a nightgown in their cells was to enforce a dress code within the facility and was not related to any sexual gesture, and therefore the finding on the deputy's alleged sexual harassment should be **Unfounded**. Finally, SCSO found that the SCSO personnel investigated the PREA matter thoroughly and concluded factual allegations to the contrary were **Unfounded**. SCSO restated its recommendation that video cameras be installed in all MADF modules.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** and **TIMELY**, and our audit was **UNTIMELY**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the evidence did not show any sexual contact by the deputy with any inmate and that the finding on this factual claim should be **UNFOUNDED**. We also **AGREED** with SCSO that there was no evidence to suggest that the deputy's admonition about dress code compliance could objectively be characterized as sexually suggesting or harassing and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**. Finally, we **AGREE** with SCSO that its personnel conducted an investigation in compliance with PREA but we conclude the finding on this issue should be **EXONERATED** rather than **UNFOUNDED** as determined by SCSO.

IOLERO's Recommendations: We agreed with SCSO's recommendation that video cameras be installed in all MADF modules.

SCSO's Response: None

Case Number: 24-C-0014

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: SCSO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that she may have been the victim of sexual assault while incarcerated at the MADF.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed internal MADF documents, interviewed the complainant, and interviewed correctional staff. SCSO found no evidence that any person entered complainant's cell during the night or the next morning when complainant alleged she was possibly sexually assaulted and concluded the finding should be **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** but **UNTIMELY**, and our audit was **TIMELY**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the evidence affirmatively showed no sexual assault occurred during the period identified by complainant and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**. We continued to note the need for placing video cameras in all MADF modules.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 24-C-0013

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: SCSO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that he was sexually assaulted by two correctional deputies at the MADF.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed BWC of the interview with complainant, incident reports, door reports for the periods identified by complainant, shift logs, and MADF video records. SCSO found no evidence that complainant was sexually assaulted by any MADF employee and concluded the finding should be **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** but **UNTIMELY**, and our audit was **TIMELY**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the evidence affirmatively showed no sexual assault was committed against complainant and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**. We further noted that complainant was plainly experiencing mental health issues and that some of the factual context of the claims showed that they were unrealistic. Nevertheless, SCSO reviewed the claims in their entirety without regard to the mental health status, as required by PREA, which is a practice that particularly strengthened SCSO's findings.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None

Use of Force

SCSO Area: Detention

Case Number: 2024-000121

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: SCSO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant submitted an incarcerated person grievance form stating that a deputy used excessive force on him in the booking area of the Sonoma County Main Adult Detention Facility (MADF). SCSO treated the grievance as a claim of excessive force and investigated it accordingly.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed the complainant's grievance form, an incident report, surveillance video footage, and medical records. SCSO interviewed the complainant and two deputies.

SCSO found that two deputies removed the complainant from the housing area after the complainant was disruptive during a fire drill. One deputy utilized a rear wrist lock control hold while escorting the complainant to a cell. SCSO concluded that the deputy did not use physical force on the complainant and reached a finding of **Unfounded**. SCSO determined that a deputy failed to activate a BWC when removing the complainant from the housing area for disruptive behavior. SCSO found that this was a violation of SCSO policy and reached a finding of **Sustained**.

IOLERO's Preliminary Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** and **NOT TIMELY**. Our audit was **NOT TIMELY**.

We **AGREED** with SCSO that the deputy did not use excessive force on the complainant. Although the deputy used a wrist lock control hold, which is viewed as a minimal "use of force," the wrist lock was a reasonable and proportional use of force and complied with law and policy. Though SCSO did not reach a finding on this specific issue, we concluded that the finding should be **EXONERATED**. We also **AGREED** with SCSO that the record showed that no deputy used any other force against the complainant, and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the deputy's failure to activate his BWC violated SCSO policy and that the finding should be **SUSTAINED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: SCSO provided a response to IOLERO's Preliminary Audit indicating that its transmittal of the completed Investigation to IOLERO beyond the agreed-upon timeframe in the Timeliness Checklist (14 days) was due to an error which prematurely identified the Investigation as "finalized" in the system, delaying the appropriate processing procedure by several weeks.

IOLERO's Final Conclusion: Based upon SCSO's response, we modified our Preliminary Audit and found that SCSO's delay in transmitting its Investigation was due to an administrative error which did not materially affect compliance with statutory deadlines or IOLERO's ability to audit the matter. Accordingly, we concluded that SCSO's Investigation was **TIMELY**.

Policy/Procedure

SCSO Area: Detention

Case Number: 24-C-0015

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity: Decline to State

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: SCSO reviewed an anonymous complaint about conditions at the MADF including out-of-cell time, COVID protocol, housekeeping, ADA compliance and alleged preferential treatment.

SCSO's Conclusion: Because the anonymous complainant could not be interviewed, SCSO broke the allegations into separate categories, reviewed relevant MADF records, and concluded that the claims were either factually Unfounded, that MADF processes complied with policy and were **Exonerated**, or that the investigation could not resolve the issue and was therefore **Not Sustained**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's investigation was **COMPLETE** and **TIMELY**, and that our audit was **NOT TIMELY**. We **AGREED** with SCSO's findings except for one where IOLERO concluded SCSO's finding of **NOT SUSTAINED** should have been **UNFOUNDED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0002

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: Complainant alleged that MADF Staff improperly acquired a DNA sample and changed a court hearing date.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO interviewed Complainant and reviewed relevant internal records. SCSO concluded that taking a DNA sample was lawful and appropriate, that the claim of "use of force" was factually **Unfounded**, and that the hearing date on the citation complied with court rules and the finding was **Exonerated**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that SCSO's investigation was **COMPLETE** and **TIMELY**, and that our audit was **NOT TIMELY**. We **AGREED** with SCSO's finding of **UNFOUNDED** and **EXONERATED** on the substantive issues.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0008

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity: Decline to State

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: Complainants challenged the legality of a module-wide strip search conducted at the MADF.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO interviewed the Complainants, submitted written questions to Staff and reviewed internal records. SCSO concluded that the module-wide strip search was appropriately authorized (**Exonerated**), and that it was conducted with due regard for privacy and sanitarness (**Unfounded**). However, SCSO concluded that the delay by the supervising officer in having the written incident report prepared violated SCSO policy and made a Sustained finding against that officer with a letter of reprimand. SCSO recommended modifying its policies to clarify procedures on inmate information requests, additional training on strip search documentation, and installation of cameras in all modules.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE** and **TIMELY**, and that our audit was **NOT TIMELY**. We **AGREED** with SCSO's finding that the search was properly authorized (**EXONERATED**), that they were carried out with due regard for privacy (**UNFOUNDED**), and (with one exception) the search was conducted in areas and in a process that were sanitary (**UNFOUNDED**). However, we concluded that the factual allegations concerning one specific aspect of the sanitarness of the search process could not be resolved and that a finding therefore could not be made on that specific issue (**NOT SUSTAINED**).

IOLERO's Recommendations: Due to gaps created by SCSO's transition from its former detention policies to the Lexipol-based policies, we recommended that SCSO specifically identify the portions of each policy in issue until this transition is completed and there is one single policy to reference.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0013

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: Complainant alleged a third-party was denied appropriate Out-of-Cell Activity time (OCA) and denied medication while incarcerated at the MADF.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO conducted a wide review of OCA documentation, movement and classification records, medical records and telephone logs to identify the inmate in question and assess the validity of the claims. SCSO found that when extrapolating OCA time during one portion of the person's incarceration, OCA could have fallen below the state-mandated cumulative requirement and entered a **Sustained** finding on this part (directed at an institutional level). However, extrapolating OCA records for the second portion of the person's incarceration showed state requirements were met and SCSO made an **Unfounded** finding on this part. SCSO also found that the evidence showed staff never denied the person medication and never treated them unfairly, reaching an **Unfounded** finding on these claims.

SCSO also provided a recommendation about how to increase OCA for incarcerated persons housed in modules holding cross-classification persons.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE** and **TIMELY**, and that our audit was **NOT TIMELY**. We **AGREED** with SCSO's findings of Sustained and Unfounded on OCA time based on the "extrapolation" method used by SCSO (which was reasonable) even though it was possible that OCA time could have been calculated using other delineations which might show OCA was compliant in all categories. We also **AGREED** with SCSO that the evidence showed proper efforts were made to identify prescription medications on record for the person and that no staff denied the person any medication for which they were prescribed; that there was no evidence any staff treated the person unfairly; and that the findings on these claims should therefore be **UNFOUNDED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: We found SCSO's recommendation on possible ways to increase OCA time in cross-classification modules to reflect practical considerations and recommended that SCSO conducted a future generalized "performance" audit of OCA time in such modules to assess how well its recommendation worked.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 21-C-0022

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: SCSO/IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: This is a legacy case from 2021. Complainant alleged that he was treated inappropriately by correctional staff at the MADF, including not receiving access to medical care.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed the person's MADF medical records, classification history, management notes, incident reports, disciplinary hearing notes, BWC files, and grievance records. SCSO also interviewed complainant and a correctional deputy. SCSO found that the evidence showed the person in fact received medical care and was never denied food or water as alleged, and that the finding on these claims should be **Unfounded**. SCSO also found no evidence that a deputy used profanity when admonishing the person for misbehavior and made a finding of **Unfounded** on that issue.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE**. Because the investigation pre-dated the Timeliness Checklist, we noted only that SCSO's investigation was not completed within the period set in Gov't Code § 3304. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the evidence showed that in fact the person received medical care, and was never denied food or water as alleged, and the claims to the contrary were factually **UNFOUNDED**. We also **AGREED** with SCSO that the record did not support the claim that the deputy used profanity when admonishing the person for misconduct and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 23-C-0071

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity: Decline to State

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: Complainant alleged that she was mistreated by MADF staff by being placed into a Sobering Cell, strip-searched, denied medical care, denied telephone access, and subjected to racial bias during her incarceration.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed MADF telephone logs, medical records, property receipts, court records, incident reports, booking forms, and MADF inmate account forms. SCSO also interviewed the complainant and involved officers and reviewed the MADF camera video. SCSO found that the evidence showed complainant was placed into a sobering cell due to the smell of alcohol and lack of cooperation in accordance with SCSO policy (**Exonerated**) and there was no evidence this was done due to race (**Unfounded**). SCSO also concluded that complainant was provided telephone access shortly after being released from the sobering cell, complainant was properly subject to a strip search under law and policy, there was no evidence anyone stole property from complainant, and MADF identified complainant's medical issues and offer her medication, but complainant left custody before it could be provided. Accordingly, SCSO concluded the finding on these latter claims should be **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE**. Because the investigation pre-dated the Timeliness Checklist, we noted that SCSO's investigation was completed within the period set in Gov't Code § 3304. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the evidence showed complainant's placement into a sobering cell was within law and policy, and there was no evidence this was due to any racial considerations, resulting in **EXONERATED** and **Unfounded** findings, respectively. We also **AGREED** with SCSO that complainant was properly subjected to a strip search, and MADF provided access to medical care, as required by law and policy, but concluded the findings on each claim should be **EXONERATED** rather than **UNFOUNDED**. We also **AGREED** with SCSO that the claim that complainant's property was stolen was factually **UNFOUNDED**. Finally, we **DISAGREED** with SCSO that the record was sufficient to make a finding as to whether complainant was provided timely access to a telephone while they were in the sobering cell and concluded the finding should be **NOT SUSTAINED** rather than **UNFOUNDED** as concluded by SCSO.

IOLERO's Recommendations: The written notice about an inmate's right to telephone required by Penal Code § 851.5 be posted in sobering cells.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 2024-000346

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: Complainant alleged that a correctional deputy disposed of illegal drugs taken from an inmate prior to a module search at the MADF.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed incident reports, shift logs, grievances from inmates,

interviewed complainant and other inmates in the module, interviewed deputies, and sent written questions to other staff. SCSO found that concluded that the evidence did not support a finding that a deputy either took possession of illegal drugs from an inmate or disposed of them during a module search and concluded the finding should be **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that SCSO's investigation was **COMPLETE** and **TIMELY**, and that IOLERO's audit was **UNTIMELY**. On the merits, we **AGREED** that the record taken as a whole did not factually support the claim and therefore the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: Because the claim addresses what would be a criminal activity were it proved true, we recommended that SCSO review its policies to determine whether the administrative investigation is a sufficient "gatekeeper" for such allegations or whether a preliminary criminal review is more appropriate. We also reiterated the recommendation (shared by SCSO) that video cameras be installed in all modules.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-PP-0006

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Policy/Procedure

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: A third-party complainant alleged that SCSO Member(s) inappropriately disclosed information to an official of the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) about a person released (the releasee) from SCSO custody.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed a Booking Sheet, Superior Court records, an ICE Detainer request, and SCSO's Immigration Matrix and accompanying notifications provided by SCSO to the releasee. SCSO also reviewed emails sent by SCSO to ICE and to the releasee's attorney, a relevant MADF Lobby Shift Log, and SCSO's Immigration Policies and Matrix. SCSO also interviewed the complainant, interviewed two Members who worked the MADF Lobby on the day in question, and reviewed relevant audio recordings of Lobby telephone calls. SCSO concluded that having provided information to ICE about the releasee's clothing and destination should be **Exonerated**. SCSO also concluded that there was no evidence that a Member was motivated by any bias based on the releasee's Hispanic background. Accordingly, SCSO concluded that issue to be **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Preliminary Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE**, and that the investigation and audit were both **TIMELY**. We concluded that SCSO Staff complied with law and policy in providing federal immigration officials notice of an inmate's impending release from MADF custody. SCSO did not make a specific finding on this point, but we concluded that the finding should have been **EXONERATED**. We **AGREED** that the record showed no evidence that a Member was motivated by bias based on national origin, immigration status, or other protected category and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**. We **DISAGREED** that the record showed that a correctional deputy's disclosure of publicly available information to an immigration official about an inmate after their release from custody did not violate established law and policy and instead concluded that the finding should be **SUSTAINED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: We provided **RECOMMENDATIONS** for addressing a training

gap concerning restrictions on assisting in the enforcement of civil immigration laws, which included: 1) having designated staff/supervisors handle all ICE requests, and 2) training for all MADF Staff on how to respond to requests for public information by immigration authorities after a person has been released from custody. The training should include instruction on the specific requirements of the Values Act and limitations on cooperation with federal authorities imposed by County and SCSO Policy.

SCSO's Response: SCSO **Timely** submitted a written response changing its initial finding of "**Exonerated**" to **Sustained** as to whether the record showed that a correctional deputy's disclosure of an inmate's clothing and location to an immigration official after the inmate's release from custody did not violate established law and policy.

IOLERO's Final Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE**, and that the investigation and audit were both **TIMELY**. We concluded that SCSO Staff complied with law and policy in providing federal immigration officials notice of an inmate's impending release from MADF custody. SCSO did not make a specific finding on this point, but we concluded that the finding should have been **EXONERATED**. We **AGREED** that the record showed no evidence that a Member was motivated by bias based on national origin, immigration status, or other protected category and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO's Response that the record showed that a correctional deputy's disclosure of publicly available information to an immigration official about an inmate after their release from custody violated established law and policy and that finding should be **SUSTAINED**

2. PATROL

Policy and Procedure; Neglect of Duty

SCSO Area: Patrol

Case Number: 2024-000282

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Decline to State

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that Deputy A made an inaccurate report and inappropriate / false statements. Based on complainant's characterization, SCSO investigated whether Deputy A violated policy related to bias-based policing, dishonesty, inaccurate statements, knowledge of laws, and neglect of duty. The complainant also alleged that (during a separate incident) Deputy B did not investigate properly and treated complainant and the suspect inappropriately; and that SCSO denied BWC records requests, did not keep dispatch records long enough, and denied requests for a stolen vehicle report.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO interviewed the complainant, reviewed BWC footage and SCSO records related to Deputy A's incident and Deputy B's incident, and reviewed reports from unrelated incidents involving the complainant.

SCSO concluded that Deputy A conducted their investigation according to policy, did not make the alleged statements, was professional, and showed no evidence of bias or dishonesty. As a result, SCSO concluded the alleged policy violations related to bias, dishonesty, and inaccurate statements were **Unfounded**, and **Exonerated** alleged policy violations related to

knowledge of laws and neglect of duty. SCSO's report discussed Deputy B but did not reach a conclusion / finding, and did not discuss the stolen vehicle report. SCSO reached findings of **Exonerated** on the other records allegations, concluding that BWC footage was exempt from disclosure and that a third party was responsible for purging SCSO's dispatch records.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was **PARTIALLY INCOMPLETE** because the record did not provide support for SCSO's conclusion that BWC footage was exempt from disclosure, and because the investigation did not address the stolen vehicle report. For the same reasons, we **DISAGREED** with SCSO's finding on the BWC allegation, and we reached **NO CONCLUSION** regarding the stolen vehicle report. On the other hand, we **AGREED** with SCSO's **EXONERATED** and **UNFOUNDED** findings related to Deputy A and Deputy B and dispatch records maintenance, for reasons similar to SCSO's reasoning. Lastly, we concluded that the investigation was **NOT TIMELY** and that our audit was **TIMELY**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0019

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: Complainant alleged that a deputy failed to respond to a noise complaint against a bar.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO sent follow-up questions to the complainant, interviewed the deputy, confirmed there were no BWC videos or reports, and tried unsuccessfully to interview the complainant. SCSO concluded that the deputy acted within the law and policy and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. Specifically, SCSO found that there was a normal amount of noise coming from the bar that night, and the deputy fulfilled their patrol functions by trying to explain the County noise ordinance to the complainant.

IOLERO's Conclusion: IOLERO concluded that SCSO's investigation was **COMPLETE**, and that both the investigation and audit were **TIMELY**. IOLERO **AGREED** with SCSO's finding of **EXONERATED** because there was no law that applied to the noise coming from the bar.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0043

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Native American

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that a deputy shot an innocent dog, and that deputies lied about it. In the course of the investigation, SCSO discovered a

possible allegation that the deputy did not turn on their body-worn camera (BWC) soon enough.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed BWC footage, dispatch records, and reports from this incident and a previous incident involving the same dog; reviewed photos and trespass paperwork from this incident; and tried unsuccessfully to interview the Complainant. On the shooting allegation, SCSO concluded that the dog reasonably appeared to pose an imminent threat and the deputy didn't have other feasible options and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO concluded that the deputy was not required to turn on their BWC while the dog posed an imminent threat and reached a finding of **Exonerated** on that allegation. SCSO also concluded that no SCSO personnel misrepresented facts about the incident.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE**, and that the investigation and audit were both **TIMELY**. We **AGREED** with both of SCSO's **EXONERATED** findings and also **AGREED** there was no evidence of misrepresentations.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 24-C-0008

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Black/African American

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: Complainant alleged that a Windsor Police Officer searched their child's backpack at school without probable cause.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed dispatch records, the police report, and BWC footage; and interviewed two school employees. SCSO found that the deputy did not search the child's backpack. Instead, school employees did the search. As a result, SCSO reached a finding of **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's investigation was **COMPLETE**. We also **AGREED** with SCSO's finding of **UNFOUNDED**, because witness statements and BWC footage showed that school employees conduct the search. However, we found that the investigation was **NOT TIMELY** because SCSO didn't forward the investigation to IOLERO within the agreed-upon timeframes. IOLERO's audit was **TIMELY**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 26-C-0009

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: Complainant alleged that a deputy did not conduct a proper

investigation and escalated an incident unnecessarily.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed BWC footage, dispatch notes, reports, and probation information related to the incident. On the investigation allegation, SCSO concluded that the deputy conducted a thorough investigation and accurately reported the incident and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. On the escalation allegation, SCSO concluded that the deputy was professional and did not escalate the situation and reached a finding of **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: IOLERO concluded that SCSO's investigation was **COMPLETE** and that both the investigation and audit were **TIMELY**. IOLERO **AGREED** with SCSO's finding of **EXONERATED**, noting that the deputy's investigation included firsthand observations, consulting with a relevant agency, and speaking to the parties. IOLERO also **AGREED** with SCSO's finding of **UNFOUNDED**, because the deputy acted professionally and reasonably, and took actions that likely de-escalated the situation.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 23-C-0082

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that deputies contacted him for camping on private property on which he had permission to camp, improperly arrested him, and improperly towed his vehicle.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed dispatch records, BWC footage, an incident report, arrest/tow documents, and a map of the properties involved. SCSO spoke with the reporting party and the owners of the private property.

SCSO determined that the complainant did not have permission to camp on private property. SCSO concluded that deputies acted lawfully and properly when they arrested the complainant for an arrest warrant and towed his vehicle incident to arrest and reached a finding of **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE**.

We **AGREED** with SCSO that the deputies lawfully arrested the complainant pursuant to an arrest warrant and towed his vehicle incident to arrest. Because the conduct that formed the basis of the complaint occurred (the arrest and the tow) and the conduct was lawful and proper, we concluded that the findings should be **EXONERATED** rather than SCSO's findings of **UNFOUNDED**.

This Investigation predates our timeliness standards.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0007

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that deputies improperly harassed them at a lawful campsite on public property and improperly damaged their tent.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed dispatch records, BWC footage, and parcel/GPS information related to the location of the incident. SCSO interviewed two involved deputies.

SCSO concluded that the campsite was illegal and that the deputies acted properly in response to a trespassing call. SCSO did not reach a formal finding regarding this allegation. SCSO determined that a deputy cut the side of the tent for safety and community caretaking purposes and not through carelessness or maliciousness, that the deputy did not violate SCSO policy, and the finding should be **Exonerated**. SCSO further determined that the deputy believed the campsite had been abandoned and the deputy was therefore not required to report the damage and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO determined that the second deputy on scene did not damage any property during the incident and concluded that the allegations related to that deputy's conduct should be **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** and **NOT TIMELY**, and that our audit was **TIMELY**.

We **AGREED** with SCSO's informal conclusion that the deputies had the authority to respond to and enforce a trespassing violation, and we concluded that the record supported an **EXONERATED** finding. We **AGREED** with SCSO that there was no evidence suggesting that the deputy damaged the complainant's tent out of carelessness or maliciousness. We noted that SCSO policy recognizes that intentional property damage sometimes occurs in the performance of law enforcement duties, and we agreed that the deputy's actions were reasonable and that the finding should be **EXONERATED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the deputies believed that the campsite had been abandoned, and that the deputy did not violate SCSO policy by failing to report the damage. Accordingly, we agreed that the finding should be **EXONERATED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the second deputy on scene did not damage any property during this incident and that the findings related to that deputy's conduct should be **UNFOUNDED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: We recommended that SCSO reach findings for all allegations raised in a complaint for a more complete investigative record. We also recommended that SCSO clearly define the terms "unattended" and "abandoned" in their policy as they relate to homeless property and clarify the distinctions between the two, and that SCSO outline the specific circumstances under which damage to such property must be reported.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0024

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainants alleged that deputies improperly searched their residence without a warrant, that deputies had a warrant with the wrong address, that deputies were discourteous when they threatened to use force against their dog and that deputies failed to activate their BWCs.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed dispatch records, incident reports, court notes, cell-phone video recordings, a recorded interview, search warrant documents and maps of the location searched. SCSO interviewed one of the two complainants and the involved detective and obtained a written statement from an involved deputy. SCSO also conducted a physical walk-through of the search warrant location and took photographs of the residence.

SCSO determined that deputies conducted a lawful and proper search pursuant to a search warrant and reached a finding of **Unfounded**. SCSO determined that the address listed on the search warrant was different than the complainants' true address. SCSO determined that the complainants' residence did not have a posted address on the building and that an internet map search incorrectly listed the complainants' address as the one used in the search warrant. SCSO determined that the search warrant contained sufficient and accurate details to identify the place to be searched and allowed law enforcement to locate and search the correct property. SCSO concluded that the error in the search warrant was not unreasonable or substantive and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO determined that the deputies acted properly by making accommodations to prevent an unnecessary use of force against the complainants' dog before entering the residence and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO determined that SCSO policy did not require plainclothes/undercover deputies to activate BWCs during the search warrant service. SCSO determined that the uniformed deputy at the scene did not activate his BWC because he inadvertently left it at the Sheriff's Office. SCSO concluded that the uniformed deputy used his work-provided cellular phone to record the incident, which was a reasonable alternative, and reached a finding of **Exonerated**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** and **TIMELY**. Our audit was also **TIMELY**.

We **AGREED** with SCSO that the deputies conducted a lawful search pursuant to a valid search warrant, and we concluded that the finding should be **EXONERATED** rather than SCSO's finding of **UNFOUNDED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the error in the search warrant did not substantively impact the investigation and that the finding should be **EXONERATED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the deputies took care to secure the complainants' dog and that the finding regarding discourtesy should be **EXONERATED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the undercover deputies were not required to activate their BWCs, that the uniformed deputy reasonably utilized his department-issued cellphone to record his involvement, and that the finding should be **EXONERATED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 23-C-0078

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Decline to State

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that deputies failed to respond to

a call for service and that a deputy was dishonest.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed dispatch records and BWC footage and interviewed the complainant. SCSO found that deputies properly responded and took appropriate action regarding the complainant's call for service and reached a finding of **Unfounded**. SCSO found that the deputy was not dishonest and reached a finding of **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE**.

We **AGREED** with SCSO that deputies properly responded and took appropriate action regarding the complainant's call for service and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the deputy did not lie to the complainant and that the finding should be Unfounded.

This Investigation predated our timeliness standards.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 2024-000345

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that a deputy was rude and inappropriately accused the complainant of trespassing.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed dispatch records, the incident report and BWC footage and interviewed the complainant. SCSO concluded that the deputy appropriately questioned the complainant during a trespassing investigation and did not treat the complainant discourteously and reached a finding of **Exonerated**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** and **NOT TIMELY**. Our audit was **TIMELY**.

We **AGREED** with SCSO that the deputy appropriately questioned the complainant during a trespassing investigation and that the deputy was otherwise courteous and professional during the interaction. Accordingly, we agreed that the finding should be **EXONERATED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 24-C-0010

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Decline to State

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that a deputy failed to respond in-

person to a report of a civil restraining order violation and that the deputy behaved discourteously.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed dispatch records and a cellphone video and interviewed the involved deputy.

SCSO determined that the deputy appropriately handled this incident and conducted a thorough investigation. SCSO concluded that the deputy gathered the required information and appropriately determined that there was no probable cause that a civil restraining order violation had occurred and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO concluded that there was no evidence that the deputy was unprofessional or discourteous and reached a finding of **Exonerated**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** and **TIMELY**. Our audit was **NOT TIMELY**.

We **AGREED** with SCSO that the deputy conducted a thorough investigation by speaking with the involved parties, reviewing video evidence and determining that there was no probable cause that a civil restraining order violation had occurred. Further, there was no evidence suggesting that the deputy acted discourteously or unprofessionally during this incident. Accordingly, we **AGREED** with SCSO's findings of **EXONERATED** as to all allegations.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 2024-000425

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Decline to State

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that deputies violated his rights by requiring that he go through court security screening, used unnecessary or excessive force on him by intentionally stepping on his foot, behaved discourteously, handcuffed him too tightly and improperly arrested him.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed BWC footage, surveillance footage, dispatch records, incident reports and an email from a sergeant to court security staff. SCSO interviewed the complainant, five involved deputies and two witness security officers.

SCSO determined that it was illegal to intentionally avoid submission to security screenings when entering or re-entering a courthouse and that security checks at courthouse entrances, including metal detectors, are permissible administrative searches. SCSO noted that there was a sign posted in the entry to the courthouse restating the law and warning that a violation may result in arrest. SCSO did not reach a formal finding regarding the allegation that the court security screening requirements violated the complainant's rights.

SCSO determined that a deputy unintentionally stepped on the complainant's foot and reached a finding of **Exonerated** regarding the unnecessary or excessive force allegation. SCSO determined that there was no evidence that deputies were discourteous and reached a finding of **Unfounded**. SCSO determined that deputies had probable cause to arrest the complainant and used proper handcuffing procedure and reached a finding of **Exonerated**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** and **TIMELY**. Our audit was also **TIMELY**. We noted that allegations of improper arrest and violation of rights were apparent from the record. SCSO addressed these allegations in the Investigation but did not reach formal findings. We concluded that the record supported findings of **EXONERATED** for these allegations.

We **AGREED** with SCSO that a deputy unintentionally stepped on the complainant's foot and that the finding regarding unnecessary or excessive force should be **EXONERATED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that there was no evidence that deputies were discourteous and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that deputies used proper handcuffing procedure and that the finding should be **EXONERATED**.

We noted that there was no BWC footage available for the Extra Help Deputies involved in this incident. At the time of this incident, SCSO's body worn camera policy provided that Extra Help Deputies were generally not issued BWCs. This provision was removed from policy in the versions dated 01/27/25 and beyond. In Audit 24-C-0003, IOLERO recommended that SCSO begin issuing BWCs to Extra Help Deputies. Shortly thereafter, SCSO began providing Extra Help Deputies with BWCs. We commended SCSO for demonstrating a commitment to improved evidence collection, documentation of events, transparency and member safety by updating this practice.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 2024-000460

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that a deputy was improperly trained to investigate elder abuse and failed to properly interview a dependent adult. The complainant further alleged that SCSO policy failed to adopt protocols pursuant to state law.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed dispatch records, an incident report and BWC footage. SCSO interviewed the involved deputy.

SCSO determined that the deputy attended the basic police academy, interview and interrogation training, and had been properly trained to investigate criminal cases. SCSO reached a finding of **Unfounded** on the allegation that the deputy was improperly trained. SCSO determined that SCSO policy was up to date and contained the necessary requirements pursuant to state law and reached a finding of **Unfounded**. SCSO did not investigate the allegation that the deputy failed to properly interview a dependent adult.

IOLERO's Preliminary Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **PARTIALLY INCOMPLETE** because it did not include an interview with the complainant or witness, it did not include a review or discussion of deputy training records, and it did not appropriately address a neglect of duty allegation that was apparent from the record. We determined that SCSO's Investigation was **TIMELY**. Our audit was **NOT TIMELY**.

We **DISAGREED** with SCSO's finding that the deputy was properly trained. We determined that the record was incomplete on this issue because it did not include a review of deputy

training records. We concluded that **NO FINDING** could be made based on the incomplete record. We **AGREED** with SCSO that SCSO policy properly adopted protocols for investigating elder and dependent adult abuse pursuant to state law, and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: SCSO provided a response to our Preliminary Audit within the agreed-upon timeframe. The response included supplemental investigation including interviews with the complainant and the witness, a review of deputy training records, a review of supplemental incident reports and a supplemental analysis regarding the neglect of duty allegation that was apparent from the record.

IOLERO's Final Conclusion: Based upon SCSO's response, we modified our Preliminary Audit and concluded that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE**. Based upon SCSO's supplemental review of deputy training records, we modified our preliminary conclusion and **AGREED** with SCSO's finding of **UNFOUNDED** on the allegation that the deputy was improperly trained. Based upon SCSO's supplemental analysis regarding the neglect of duty allegation, we modified our preliminary conclusion and **AGREED** with SCSO's finding of **UNFOUNDED** on the allegation that the deputy failed to properly interview a dependent adult.

We reaffirmed our preliminary conclusion that we **AGREED** with SCSO that policy properly adopted protocols for investigating elder and dependent adult abuse pursuant to state law, and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**.

Case Number: 2024-000012

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that a deputy improperly searched and towed a vehicle. The complainant also marked the "dishonesty" allegation on the complaint form.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed an incident report, DMV records, a tow form and BWC footage. SCSO did not interview the complainant, a witness or the involved deputy as part of the investigation.

SCSO determined that the involved deputy properly towed the vehicle for expired registration and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO determined that the involved deputy properly conducted an inventory search of the vehicle pursuant to SCSO policy requirements and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO determined that there was no evidence that the involved deputy was dishonest during this incident and reached a finding of **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** and **NOT TIMELY**. Our audit was also **NOT TIMELY**.

We **AGREED** with SCSO that the involved deputy lawfully and properly towed the vehicle for expired registration and that the finding should be **EXONERATED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the involved deputy lawfully and properly conducted an inventory search of the vehicle and that the finding should be **EXONERATED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the record showed no evidence of dishonesty during this incident and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: We noted that SCSO did not interview the complainant as part of the investigation and recommended that SCSO attempt to interview complainants in all cases pursuant to best practices.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0006

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged SCSO deputies engaged in misconduct in connection with responding to complainant's dispute with her former landlord.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed relevant incident reports, mandatory child abuse reports, dispatch records, BWC files for several deputies, and interviewed complainant and several deputies. SCSO found no evidence that deputies told complainant to leave a home in which she rented a room and concluded the finding on this should be **Unfounded**. SCSO also found no evidence that a separate deputy failed to take complainant's report on another call or misrepresented facts in the written reports and that the finding on this claim should be **Unfounded**, and that the deputy acted in accordance with law and policy resulting in a finding of **Exonerated**. Finally, SCSO found no evidence that a third deputy retaliated against complainant during a child abuse review and concluded that claim was **Unfounded**, and further concluded the deputy acted in accordance with law and policy and the finding on that issue should be **Exonerated**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** and **TIMELY**, and IOLERO's audit was **TIMELY**. On the merits, we **AGREED** with SCSO that the evidence showed the deputy did not try to compel complainant to leave the rented home and the finding on that issue should be **UNFOUNDED**. We also **AGREED** with SCSO that the record showed a second deputy investigated complainant's claims in accordance with law and policy and the finding should be **EXONERATED**, and that complainant's factual allegations that the deputy engaged in misrepresentations was **UNFOUNDED**. Finally, we **AGREED** with SCSO that the third deputy investigated the child abuse report in accordance with law and policy and the finding should be **EXONERATED**, and that complainant's factual claim that the deputy misrepresented facts and discriminated against complainant was **UNFOUNDED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 2024-000010

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that SCSO Members unjustifiably

and forcibly removed the complainant from a residence.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed policy and procedure for execution of evictions, the relevant civil case file, BWC video, and conducted interviews. SCSO concluded that the Members' actions to effectuate an eviction were within law and policy. SCSO reached a finding of **Exonerated**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE**, that the investigation was **TIMELY**, and the audit was **UNTIMELY**. We **AGREED** that the investigative record supported SCSO's conclusions and, therefore, **AGREED** with SCSO's findings of **EXONERATED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 23-C-0043

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Decline to State

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that an SCSO Member did not believe the complainant's domestic violence report and that the Member did not offer domestic violence services as required.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO interviewed the accused Member. SCSO also reviewed BWC video of the incident and the associated incident report. SCSO concluded that a domestic violence report had been properly taken and that the required domestic violence referrals had been made. SCSO made findings of **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was sufficiently **COMPLETE**. The complaint predated timeliness agreements between SCSO and IOLERO. We **AGREED** with SCSO's conclusions that a domestic violence report and required referrals were properly made. Accordingly, we **AGREED** with SCSO's findings of **UNFOUNDED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0003

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Decline to State

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that SCSO Members failed to investigate a sexual assault report.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed BWC footage, audio-recorded interviews, and documentation in reports. SCSO concluded that a preponderance of the evidence showed

SCSO Members conducted a proper sexual assault investigation. SCSO reached a finding of **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE**, and that the investigation and audit were both **TIMELY**. We **AGREED** with SCSO's conclusion that Members conducted a proper sexual assault investigation, and, therefore, **AGREED** with SCSO's findings of **UNFOUNDED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0029

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Decline to State

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant made allegations in 25-C-0029 that were identical to those investigated in 22-C-0028. The allegations were that SCSO intentionally ignored information provided by a Private Investigator and that SCSO neglected its duty to properly investigate a crime.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO's reviewed the 22-C-0028 investigative material, which included its complaint form, an interview recording, an SCSO incident report, SCSO response letters to the complainant, and IOLERO's audit of 22-C-0028. In the 22-C-0028 investigation, SCSO concluded that the evidence showed the allegations to be without merit. Regarding the allegation SCSO intentionally ignored information provided by a Private Investigator, SCSO made a finding of **Unfounded**. Regarding the allegation that SCSO neglected its duty to properly investigate a crime, SCSO made a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO also reviewed the 25-C-0029 complaint form. SCSO reiterated the 22-C-0028 findings in 25-C-0029.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We **AGREED** with SCSO's conclusion that the allegations contained in this 25-C-0029 were identical to allegations previously investigated by SCSO, and audited by IOLERO, in case 22-C-0028. In 22-C-0028, IOLERO **AGREED** with SCSO's findings of **UNFOUNDED** and **EXONERATED**. Accordingly, we **AGREED** with SCSO's duplicate findings in 25-C-0029. Timeliness and completeness checklists were not applied because 22-C-0028 predated those agreements.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0042

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant made several allegations from various

incidents spanning the course of 41 years to 6 months prior the date of this complaint. The allegations included: SCSO Members used excessive force during complainant's arrest; Members neglected their duty to respond to a 9-1-1 call; two separate incidents where Members authored false or inaccurate incident reports; and Members' improper or unlawful arrest of the complainant.

SCSO's Conclusion: The excessive force allegation could not be substantiated or disproven due to challenges with identification and passage of time. SCSO made a finding of **Not Sustained**. The allegation of neglect of duty to respond to a 9-1-1 call was disproven by a preponderance of the evidence. SCSO made a finding of **Unfounded**. The two separate allegations of false or inaccurate reports were both shown by documentary evidence to be without merit. SCSO made findings of **Exonerated** on one and **Unfounded** on the other. Lastly, the allegation of improper or unlawful arrest was shown to be without merit, as documentary evidence showed the arrest was lawful. SCSO made a finding of **Exonerated**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE**, and that the investigation and audit were both **TIMELY**. We **AGREED** that SCSO's conclusions and findings on all allegations were supported by the investigative record.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 26-C-0008

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that on two separate instances SCSO Members failed to accept a criminal report from the complainant.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed several CAD reports, an incident report, and two BWC videos. SCSO concluded that a Member did in fact take an incident report and also properly referred the complainant to another law enforcement agency regarding an incident that fell outside of SCSO's jurisdiction. SCSO made a finding of **Exonerated**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE**, and that the investigation and audit were both **TIMELY**. We **AGREED** with SCSO's conclusions that the Member properly processed the complainant's reports and made a proper referral to an outside agency. Accordingly, we **AGREED** with SCSO's findings of **EXONERATED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Bias / Conduct Unbecoming / Dishonesty

SCSO Area: Main Office

Case Number: 22-C-0021

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Decline to State

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that an SCSO officer illegally used a controlled substance; bullied other employees; used anti-gay slurs and was biased against female employees; had outside employment that violated law/policy; and used department resources for outside employment.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO interviewed the subject and four witnesses, reviewed a related County investigation, and reviewed various SCSO records. SCSO concluded that the outside employment did not violate law or policy and reached a finding of **Exonerated** on that allegation. SCSO reached findings of **Unfounded** on all other allegations, concluding that the employee didn't use a controlled substance or department resources; that there was no evidence of bullying; and that the employee didn't make the alleged slurs or demonstrate the alleged bias.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that the Investigation was **COMPLETE**, and we **AGREED** with the **EXONERATED** and **UNFOUNDED** findings. This Investigation predated our timeliness standards.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0016

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Hispanic/Latine(x)

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that search warrants executed by SCSO officers at two properties owned by complainant were improperly precipitated as harassment by an ex-partner and complainant further challenged officers' actions during the searches generally.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed photos, incident reports, BWC files, SCSO call reports for the searches, court records, security and cell phone video and written statements from complainant's employees. SCSO also interviewed complainant and the lead officers in charge of the property searches. SCSO concluded that the search warrants followed policy and were based on legal grounds and were not the product of harassment and concluded this claim was **Unfounded**. SCSO also found that property damage caused during the searches was minimal and necessary, compliant with law and policy, and the finding should be **Exonerated** for both search locations.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that SCSO's investigation was **COMPLETE** and **TIMELY**, and IOLERO's audit was **TIMELY**. On the merits, we **AGREED** with SCSO that the record showed compliance with law and policy in procuring and executing the search warrants and that the finding should be **EXONERATED**, that there was no evidence of harassment and the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**, and that property damage caused during the searches was minimal and required by the searches and that the finding should **EXONERATED**. Finally, we **AGREED** with SCSO that the evidence showed all officers involved in the searches conducted themselves professionally and courteously in compliance with law and policy and the finding on this issue should be **EXONERATED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0035

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that SCSO committed employment discrimination based on the complainant's disability.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed a completed investigation conducted by the County of Sonoma Human Resources Dept. – EEO/ADA Division, which found proper accommodations had been provided. SCSO made a finding of **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE**, and that the investigation and audit were both **TIMELY**. We **AGREED** with SCSO's conclusion that the allegations were disproven by the County EEO/ADA Division, and, therefore, **AGREED** with SCSO's findings of **UNFOUNDED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 26-C-0011

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that SCSO Members intentionally failed to follow orders to serve court documents and that the Members had a discriminatory motive in doing so.

SCSO's Conclusion: The investigator reviewed court documents related to the attempted service of process and interviewed SCSO's Civil Manager. SCSO concluded that service of complainant's court process had been attempted and that there was no evidence of discrimination. SCSO made findings of **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE**, and that the investigation and audit were both **TIMELY**. We **AGREED** with SCSO's conclusions that service had been attempted and that there was no evidence of discrimination. Accordingly, we **AGREED** with SCSO's findings of **UNFOUNDED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

SCSO Area: Patrol

Case Number: 23-C-0084

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: SCSO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Black/African American

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that a deputy failed to interview a witness to a battery, failed to accept a citizen's arrest due to racial bias, failed to seek an emergency protective order (EPO) and unlawfully directed the complainant to leave a domestic violence shelter.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed dispatch records, an incident report and BWC footage. SCSO interviewed one civilian witness to the incident.

SCSO concluded that the deputy did not need to interview a witness because the deputy had already ruled out probable cause for a citizen's arrest and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO determined that there was no evidence of bias-based policing and reached a finding of **Unfounded**. SCSO determined that the complainant was ineligible for an EPO and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO determined that the involved deputy properly directed the complainant to leave a domestic violence shelter upon the property agent's request and reached a finding of **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **PARTIALLY INCOMPLETE** because SCSO failed to interview the involved deputy, which was necessary to address several outstanding questions and to reach findings on two of the four allegations in this case. We determined that an interview of the involved deputy could have clarified whether he attempted to contact the witness at some point not captured on BWC, or, if not, why he decided not to do so. SCSO policy requires that deputies make a preliminary determination of whether a crime has occurred by minimally obtaining an initial statement from any witnesses or complainants. We **DISAGREED** with SCSO's conclusion that a witness statement was unnecessary, and we concluded that without a statement from the involved deputy, **NO FINDING** could reasonably be reached. We determined that there did not appear to be any explicit indications of racial bias in the record, but without a statement from the involved deputy answering the outstanding questions, we could not rule it out. We **DISAGREED** with SCSO and concluded that **NO FINDING** could reasonably be reached regarding the allegation that the involved deputy failed to accept a citizen's arrest due to bias. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the involved deputy was not required to seek an EPO for the complainant and that the finding should be **EXONERATED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the involved deputy complied with law and policy when he directed the complainant to leave the shelter upon the employee's request. We concluded that the finding should be **EXONERATED** rather than SCSO's finding of **UNFOUNDED**.

This Investigation predates our timeliness standards.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 24-C-0003

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Decline to State

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that deputies improperly removed the complainant from court, that a deputy failed to provide a badge number upon request and engaged in bias-based policing.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed BWC footage and interviewed two deputies and one civilian witness. SCSO did not record the civilian witness interview. SCSO found that there was insufficient evidence to show that deputies committed the alleged conduct and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO did not separate the conduct by allegation or deputy and reached one finding for all allegations.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **PARTIALLY INCOMPLETE** because the civilian witness interview was not recorded and because the investigation did not appropriately address a bias-based policing allegation that was apparent from the record.

We **AGREED** with SCSO that deputies lawfully removed the complainant from court pursuant to the court commissioner's orders and that the finding should be **EXONERATED**. We **DISAGREED** with SCSO's finding of **EXONERATED** on the allegation that a deputy failed to provide a badge number upon request. We concluded that there was insufficient evidence to reach a **SUSTAINED** or **EXONERATED** finding and that the appropriate finding was **NOT SUSTAINED**.

This Investigation predated our timeliness standards.

IOLERO's Recommendations: We recommended that SCSO issue BWCs to Extra-Help Deputies.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0004

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that deputies were biased and violated law and policy in their law enforcement interactions with him over a period of seven months.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO conducted a sweeping and exhaustive review of these claims,

including interviewing complainant, interviewing specifically identified deputies, requesting additional information from complainant, reviewing SCSO call records and BWC files for multiple staff over a lengthy period, and reviewed search warrant and court filings. SCSO concluded that claims of bias, discourtesy, and neglect of duty against deputies was factually **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that SCSO's investigation was **COMPLETE**; indeed, SCSO's review was exhaustive. We also concluded that SCSO's investigation and IOLERO audit were **TIMELY**.

On the merits, we **AGREED** with SCSO that the record affirmatively showed deputies responded to multiple calls for service in a professional and courteous manner, there was no evidence of any bias, and deputies acted within law and policy, and therefore the finding on all factual claims to the contrary claims should be **UNFOUNDED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 24-C-0011

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: SCSO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that deputies serving as courthouse security engaged in discourteous conduct and stole property when they escorted her from the courthouse.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO interviewed court security deputies and their supervisor and court personnel, and attempted to interview complainant but was unable to contact them. SCSO concluded that a deputy's placing their hand on a shoulder to direct complainant to the exit when ordered by the judge was within law and policy and the finding should be **Exonerated**. SCSO also found no evidence that any deputy was discourteous to complainant or that anyone stole her property and concluded these claims were factually **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that SCSO's investigation was **COMPLETE** but **UNTIMELY**, and IOLERO's audit was **TIMELY**. On the merits, we **AGREED** with SCSO that the deputy acted within law and policy when escorting complainant from the courtroom. However, we concluded that the record showed that complainant's claim of force was actually based on inaccurate factual characterizations that she was "shoved" and "pushed" and that the finding on this claim should have been **UNFOUNDED** rather than **EXONERATED**. We also **AGREED** with SCSO that there was no evidence of discourteous conduct or any deputy stealing property and the finding on these claims should be **UNFOUNDED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 23-C-0090 **Case Number:** 25-C-0030

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: Regarding 23-C-0090, the complainant alleged that a Member made an unlawful, retaliatory arrest of the complainant. Regarding 25-C-0030, the complainant made a duplicate complaint regarding the same incident investigated in 23-C-0090.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed a 2025 audio recording of the complainant articulating the complaint, a 2023 letter from the complainant articulating the complaint, and investigative material from 23-C-0090. SCSO's concluded that the alleged misconduct did not involve an SCSO Member. SCSO made a finding of **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: The investigation predated timeliness agreements between SCSO and IOLERO. Regarding 23-C-0090, we **AGREED** with SCSO's conclusion that the alleged misconduct did not involve an SCSO Member and **AGREED** with the finding of **UNFOUNDED**. Regarding 25-C-0030, we **AGREED** with SCSO's conclusion of **UNFOUNDED** because the misconduct alleged was already investigated in 23-C-0090.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0032

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Decline to State

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: An SCSO Member omitted and/or misrepresented facts in official law enforcement document(s) or conducted an improper investigation.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed BWC footage capturing the interaction at issue between the complainant and the SCSO Member. SCSO also reviewed incident reports, CAD notes, Superior Court minute orders, and related IA investigations. SCSO concluded the evidence showed that a proper investigation occurred and that there was no evidence misrepresentation or improper omission of facts. SCSO made findings of **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE**, and that the investigation and audit were both **TIMELY**. We **AGREED** with SCSO's conclusions were supported by the investigative record, and, therefore, **AGREED** with SCSO's findings of **UNFOUNDED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

SCSO Area: Dispatch

Case Number: 25-C-0015

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Hispanic/Latine(x)

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that when calling SCSO to request service, an SCSO dispatcher asked the complainant to describe the suspect's race and/or ethnicity.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed an interview with the complainant, SCSO Dispatch policy and practice, CLETS entry forms requiring entries for race/ethnicity, the SCSO County Dept. of Health website showing most common races/ethnicities of Sonoma County, Dispatch chronology of the incident, and Dispatch audio capturing the call for service. SCSO concluded that the Member's actions followed law and policy. SCSO reached a finding of **Exonerated**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE**, and that the investigation and audit were both **TIMELY**. We **AGREED** with SCSO's conclusion that that the Member's actions followed law and policy and **AGREED** with SCSO's findings of **EXONERATED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Use of Force

SCSO Area: Patrol

Case Number: 23-C-0086

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Decline to State

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that deputies used unnecessary or excessive force, improperly “hog tied” a person and engaged in bias-based policing.

SCSO’s Conclusion: SCSO reviewed dispatch records, incident reports and BWC footage. SCSO interviewed the reporting party and the person who was arrested during the incident. SCSO found that deputies did not use unnecessary or excessive force and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO found that deputies did not engage in bias-based policing and reached a finding of **Unfounded**.

IOLERO’s Conclusion: We concluded that SCSO’s Investigation was **PARTIALLY INCOMPLETE** because it did not address an improper restraint allegation that was apparent from the record and did not thoroughly analyze the facts in relation to the law and policy. Although the record showed that the deputies applied a department-approved maximum restraint cord and did not “hog tie” anyone, SCSO failed to note that an involved deputy used the term “hog tie” during the incident, failed to describe the differences between the maximum restraint cord application and hog tying and did not cite the relevant department policy.

We **AGREED** with SCSO that deputies had probable cause to arrest a person for public intoxication and later for resisting arrest. The record showed that deputies used control holds and minimal pain compliance techniques, which were reasonably necessary to overcome the person’s resistance and place the person under arrest. Accordingly, we **AGREED** with SCSO that the claim of unnecessary or excessive force should be **EXONERATED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that there was no evidence that the deputies engaged in bias-based policing and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**.

This Investigation predated our timeliness standards.

IOLERO’s Recommendations: SCSO suggested that the maximum restraint cord was “casually referred to as ‘hog tying’” but did not cite the policy section which explicitly prohibited the “hog tie” technique. We concluded that if deputies commonly referred to the approved maximum restraint cord application as “hog tying,” this was naturally misleading and confusing to the public. We recommended that deputies be trained to discontinue using the term “hog tie” to describe the approved restraint technique.

SCSO’s Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0010

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: SCSO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that deputies used unnecessary or excessive force and improperly threatened arrest. SCSO also addressed whether the involved deputies appropriately de-escalated the incident and whether they were required to document the incident in a report.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed BWC footage, surveillance video footage, the "Local Rules of Court" and a Sonoma County Superior Court General Order. SCSO interviewed the complainant, two involved deputies and one witness deputy. SCSO also obtained a written statement from one witness sergeant.

SCSO determined that the deputies had minimal physical contact with the complainant which was reasonable and necessary to control the complainant's movements. SCSO concluded that this did not amount to a reportable use of force and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO determined that the deputies employed appropriate de-escalation tactics during this incident and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO determined that the deputies had probable cause to arrest the complainant, but they utilized discretion and decided against it. SCSO concluded that the deputies acted properly when they advised the complainant that he would be arrested if he did not comply and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO determined that the deputies were not required to document the force used during this incident and reached a finding of **Exonerated**.

SCSO addressed the mental health considerations that arose during this incident and concluded that the deputies acted appropriately in their interactions with the complainant and properly utilized discretion in their decision not to take law enforcement action.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** and **TIMELY**, and we noted that the Investigation was exemplary. Our audit was also **TIMELY**.

We **AGREED** with SCSO that the involved deputies' physical contact with the complainant did not amount to a use of force and that the finding should be **Exonerated**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the involved deputies appropriately de-escalated during this incident and that the finding should be **EXONERATED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the involved deputies acted properly when they advised the complainant that he could be arrested and that the finding should be **EXONERATED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that an incident report was not required and that the finding should be **EXONERATED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 24-C-0024

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that deputies unlawfully detained him, used unnecessary or excessive force, failed to provide medical aid, behaved discourteously and made false statements in an incident report.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed dispatch records, incident reports, a Certificate of Release, BWC footage, surveillance footage and email correspondence. SCSO interviewed the complainant and one deputy.

SCSO determined that deputies lawfully detained the complainant for contempt of court pursuant to a judge's orders and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO determined that there was no evidence that deputies used physical force on the complainant and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO determined that deputies promptly summoned medical aid for the complainant upon request and reached a finding of **Unfounded**. SCSO determined that there was no evidence that deputies were discourteous toward the complainant and reached a finding of **Unfounded**. SCSO determined that the incident report accurately reflected the incident and reached a finding of **Exonerated**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** and **NOT TIMELY**. Our audit was **TIMELY**.

We **AGREED** with SCSO that deputies lawfully detained the complainant and that the finding should be **EXONERATED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that there was no evidence that deputies used physical force on the complainant and concluded that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED** rather than SCSO's **EXONERATED** finding. We **AGREED** with SCSO that deputies promptly summoned medical aid for the complainant upon request and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that there was no evidence that deputies were discourteous toward the complainant and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the incident report accurately reflected the incident and that the claim of dishonesty should be **EXONERATED**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 24-C-0020

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: SCSO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that deputies were discourteous and discriminatory, used unnecessary or excessive force, used improper handcuffing procedure and made an improper arrest.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed dispatch records, an incident report, BWC footage, surveillance video footage and medical records and interviewed seven deputies.

SCSO found that there was no evidence that deputies engaged in discriminatory, discourteous, or biased behavior towards the complainant, and reached a finding of **Unfounded**. SCSO found that deputies did not use any physical force during this incident and reached a finding of **Unfounded**. SCSO found that deputies used proper handcuffing procedures and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO addressed the improper arrest allegation and noted that deputies properly arrested the complainant for making repetitive, harassing phone calls to 9-1-1. SCSO did not identify improper arrest as an independent allegation or reach a finding related to that allegation.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE**. We noted that an improper arrest allegation was apparent from the record. Although SCSO addressed the arrest within the analysis of the other allegations, we noted that it should have been addressed independently with its own finding. We concluded that the record supported a finding of

EXONERATED.

We **AGREED** with SCSO that there was no evidence that deputies engaged in disrespectful, discourteous, or discriminatory conduct and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that deputies did not use physical force on the complainant and that the finding should be **UNFOUNDED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that deputies used proper handcuffing procedure and that the finding should be **EXONERATED**.

This Investigation predated our timeliness standards.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 24-C-0019

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Decline to State

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that deputies lost his dog's collar and leash, used unnecessary or excessive force, engaged in conduct unbecoming and behaved discourteously.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed dispatch records, BWC footage, and an incident report. SCSO interviewed the complainant, the two involved deputies, and a witness Community Services Officer (CSO). SCSO interviewed another witness but did not record the interview.

SCSO determined that there was no indication where the dog's collar and leash may have been lost, that the collar and leash stayed with the dog through its time with the deputies, and that it was more than likely that the collar and leash were transferred to the custody of animal control along with the dog. SCSO reached a finding of **Unfounded** regarding the allegation that the deputies lost the complainant's property. SCSO determined that there was no force used against the complainant and reached a finding of **Unfounded**. SCSO determined that the deputies were professional and courteous and that the allegations of conduct unbecoming a deputy, discourtesy and dishonesty should be **Unfounded**.

SCSO discovered that a deputy did not activate his BWC during this incident because the battery was not charged. SCSO discovered that the other deputy's BWC battery died 38 minutes into the incident. SCSO **Sustained** the first deputy for violating SCSO's BWC policy and **Exonerated** the other deputy.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **PARTIALLY INCOMPLETE** because it did not thoroughly address the use of force or the BWC allegations and it did not appropriately address an improper handcuffing allegation that was apparent from the record. We found that SCSO's deputy interviews were extremely limited in scope and included leading questions. Further, a witness interview was not recorded, and the investigation did not thoroughly analyze the facts in relation to the law and policy. We found that SCSO's Investigation was **TIMELY**. Our audit was **NOT TIMELY**.

We **DISAGREED** with SCSO's finding of **UNFOUNDED** on the allegation that the deputies misplaced the complainant's property. We determined that there was insufficient evidence to show whether the collar and leash remained with the dog through its time with the deputies,

and we concluded that the appropriate finding was **NOT SUSTAINED**. We **DISAGREED** with SCSO's finding of **UNFOUNDED** on the allegation that the deputies used physical force on the complainant. The incident report indicated that the deputies encountered resistance during handcuffing, which they had to overcome. This shows that some amount of physical force was used during this incident. SCSO did not address this evidence, did not apply the relevant policy, did not ask the deputies any questions related to the force they used to overcome the complainant's resistance, and did not analyze the reasonableness of the force used. Accordingly, we concluded that the record was incomplete on this issue, and **NO FINDING** could be made. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the deputies were courteous and professional during this incident and that the findings regarding conduct unbecoming a deputy, discourtesy and dishonesty should be **UNFOUNDED**.

We **DISAGREED** with SCSO's findings of **EXONERATED** and **SUSTAINED** on the allegations that the deputies failed to comply with SCSO's BWC policy. SCSO did not distinguish why one deputy should be Sustained and the other should be Exonerated despite neither deputy having a charged BWC battery sufficient to capture this entire incident. SCSO did not cite policy or describe how these conclusions were reached. Further, SCSO did not ask either deputy to explain why their BWC batteries were not charged, when they realized they were not charged, what their understanding of policy was, or how they were trained regarding charging, maintaining or activating their BWCs. Accordingly, we concluded that the record was incomplete on this issue, and **NO FINDING** could be made.

IOLERO's Recommendations: We recommended that for a thorough analysis, SCSO should describe how the facts were applied to and weighed against policy as interpreted by SCSO.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 21-C-0013

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of the Use of Force Subject: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: Complainant alleged that use of a canine to apprehend him after an hour-long standoff violated law and policy, claiming the deputy intentionally directed the canine to bite/release/re-bite several times.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed BWC files of the incident and interviewed the involved deputies and the Complainant. Based on this record, SCSO determine that the use of force through canine apprehension complied with law and policy (**Exonerated**), the factual claim that the deputy had the canine bite Complainant repeatedly was factually **Unfounded**, and the claim of discourtesy was factually **Unfounded**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: This is a legacy matter from 2021. We concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE**. We also **AGREED** with SCSO's finding on use of force (**EXONERATED**). The record showed officers had reasonable factual basis to conclude the Complainant was armed with a weapon, extensive de-escalation efforts were made to bring about a voluntary surrender, and the canine deployment was limited and controlled and was therefore proportional to the Complainant's resistance. We also **AGREED** with SCSO that the factual claims that the deputy intentionally had the canine bite Complainant multiple times, and that the deputy was discourteous, were factually **UNFOUNDED**. Finally, we **NOTED** that there was

ambiguity as to why the canine failed to release Complainant's sweatshirt (e.g., did tooth get stuck or did canine fail to heed command) which is an important issue to be addressed in all canine deployments.

IOLERO's Recommendations: SCSO evaluate any delays in a canine's release of a bite to determine the cause.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0001

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of the Use of Force Subject: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: Complainant alleged that SCSO deputies used excessive force during his arrest and engaged in inappropriate conducting during a subsequent probation search and prosecution.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed the incident reports, BWC files, court records, SCSO's internal use of force review, photographs, and interviewed complainant and several deputies. SCSO concluded that use of force (involving brandishing weapons and using minimal pressure to hold the complainant) complied with law and policy and made a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO also found that the probation search, which included damage to an interior locked door, was within law and policy and entered an **Exonerated** finding on those issues. Finally, SCSO found no evidence that any deputy planted evidence, allowed a cat to escape, stole a tool, or knocked over security cameras (as alleged by complainant) and concluded these claims were **Unfounded**, while one instance where a deputy laid a camera face-down for legitimate security purposes was within law and policy and the finding there should be **Exonerated**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We concluded the investigation was **COMPLETE**, that SCSO's investigation was **UNTIMELY** and our audit was **TIMELY**. We also **AGREED** with SCSO's findings on each of the identified issues largely on the bases identified by SCSO in its investigation.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 24-C-0009

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that SCSO's response to a call for service resulting in the use of tear gas was excessive.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed the incident reports from multiple officers the judicial warrants that had been issued, the SWAT team after action report, SCSO's use of force review,

dispatch records, photos of the scene, audio recordings, and BWC files. SCSO found that the use of tear gas to address a barricade situation, and pulling the person from the home after deployment, were justified under law and policy, were proportional and followed reasonable efforts at de-escalation, resulting in a finding of **Exonerated** under SCSO's general use of force policies and its specific policy concerning use of tear gas.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** but **UNTIMELY** and IOLERO's audit was **TIMELY**. On the merits, we **AGREED** with SCSO that the actions taken by SCSO officers complied with law and policy. First, although SCSO did not make a specific finding, we **AGREED** that the record showed SCSO's overall response to the scene with multiple units and later with a SWAT unit was supported by the barricade of the person in the home and the objective risk of harm due to access to firearms, and we would have made a finding of **EXONERATED** on this point. Second, we **AGREE** with SCSO that the record showed SCSO personnel engaged in lengthy de-escalation efforts, and that use of tear gas and puling the individual from the building under the specific circumstances was reasonable and proportional under governing law and policy and that the finding should be **EXONERATED**. However, we noted that civil liability for property damage caused by the use of tear gas is unclear under governing law.

IOLERO's Recommendations: SCSO track developments in federal constitutional rulings concerning civil liability associated with tear gas use in homes or buildings.

SCSO's Response: None.

Constitutional Issues

SCSO Area: Patrol

Case Number: 25-C-0012

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: White

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant alleged that a deputy violated the 4th Amendment and failed to properly safekeep property belonging to an unsheltered individual (named as a witness). SCSO determined during its investigation that the deputy did not activate a BWC during this incident and addressed the allegation accordingly.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed dispatch records and interviewed the complainant, the named witness and the involved deputy.

SCSO determined that the deputy did not search, seize, collect or discard any items during this incident. SCSO determined that the deputy attempted to gain compliance with individuals blocking a trail in violation of park rules and County ordinance and properly explained the procedures for handling property left on the trail. SCSO concluded that the deputy did not violate the 4th Amendment and reached a finding of **Exonerated**. SCSO concluded that the deputy was not required to offer storage or safekeeping for property not collected and reached a finding of **Unfounded**. SCSO concluded that the deputy did not activate a BWC during this incident and gave the deputy a **verbal reprimand**.

IOLERO's Conclusion: We found that SCSO's Investigation was **COMPLETE** and **NOT TIMELY**. Our audit was **TIMELY**. We noted that the Investigator failed to record the deputy interview. The Internal Affairs Lieutenant explained that the Investigator had minimal experience conducting internal affairs investigations. The Internal Affairs Lieutenant addressed this with the Investigator and expressed the importance of recording interviews. We appreciated that SCSO addressed this issue in advance of our audit.

We **AGREED** with SCSO that the deputy did not search or seize any property during this incident and that the finding regarding a 4th Amendment violation should be **EXONERATED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the finding regarding the failure to safekeep property should be **UNFOUNDED**. We **AGREED** with SCSO that the deputy's failure to activate his BWC violated policy. Because the evidence in this case was sufficient to resolve the allegations without BWC footage, and because the deputy did not have a history of BWC violations, we concluded that a **VERBAL REPRIMAND** and a review of policy was appropriate.

IOLERO's Recommendations: None.

SCSO's Response: None.

Case Number: 25-C-0011

Origin of Complaint/Investigation: IOLERO

Type of Investigation: Citizen Complaint

Race or Ethnicity of Complainant: Hispanic/Latine(x)

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant reported that they were robbed. At the scene, a deputy searched the complainant's backpack and arrested the complainant for drug-related items found during the search. The complainant alleged that the backpack search was illegal, and that the deputy did not take a report about the robbery. SCSO discovered additional possible allegations that the deputy had written incomplete reports for the incident or had included false or misleading statements in their reports.

SCSO's Conclusion: SCSO reviewed BWC footage and various written SCSO records; interviewed the deputy and two other SCSO members who were at the scene; contacted a Deputy DA who had dismissed the complainant's drug charges; and tried unsuccessfully to interview the complainant.

On the question of whether the backpack search violated the Fourth Amendment or search policy, SCSO reached a finding of **Not Sustained**. They concluded that the deputy had probable cause for the search, the deputy did not have a warrant, but the legality of the warrantless search could not be determined from the evidence. SCSO also concluded that the search did not exceed the deputy's lawful police powers and reached a finding of **Exonerated** under a related policy.

On the reporting issue, SCSO concluded that the deputy's reports were incomplete, but were the result of time pressure and failing to review BWC footage. As a result, SCSO **Sustained** a violation of report writing policy, and **Unfounded** the allegation of false/misleading statements. SCSO also concluded that the deputy took all required reports and **Exonerated** the deputy on that allegation. Lastly, the Investigator recommended that SCSO reconsider its current report-writing deadlines, because they are not generally attainable.

IOLERO's Preliminary Conclusion: IOLERO **DISAGREED** with SCSO's search-related findings. We concluded that the deputy searched the complainant's backpack without a warrant or an exception to the warrant requirement, making the search unlawful and unreasonable. As a result, we concluded that a preponderance of the evidence supported a finding of **SUSTAINED** under the Fourth Amendment / search policy, and under the policy regarding lawful police powers.

IOLERO also **DISAGREED** with SCSO's finding on false/misleading statements. We concluded that there was insufficient evidence in the record to sustain the allegation, but that discrepancies in the deputy's explanation and other interview statements also did not support an exonerated finding. As a result, we concluded that **NOT SUSTAINED** was a more appropriate finding. On the other hand, we **AGREED** with SCSO's findings regarding incomplete reports (**SUSTAINED**) and missing reports (**EXONERATED**).

Lastly, IOLERO concluded that the investigation was **COMPLETE**, and that the investigation and audit were both **TIMELY**.

IOLERO's Recommendations: IOLERO recommended additional training on search warrant exceptions for the deputy and two other SCSO members and made recommendations for improving future IA investigations that challenge the lawfulness of a search. IOLERO also agreed with the IA Investigator's recommendation regarding reporting deadlines.

SCSO's Response: SCSO provided substantial additional analysis and reaffirmed its original

findings. Search allegation: SCSO analyzed two legal exceptions to the warrant requirement – searches incident to arrest, and exigent circumstances. SCSO concluded that both of these exceptions might apply to the backpack search (preventing a **Sustained** finding), but that there was insufficient evidence to conclude that the exceptions *did* apply. False/misleading statements allegation: SCSO considered the facts and IOLERO’s analysis and concluded that there was no evidence to suggest that the deputy made false/misleading statements. As for IOLERO’s recommendations, SCSO declined to adopt the training recommendations, but said it would consider the investigation-related recommendations on a case-by-case basis.

IOLERO’s Final Conclusion: IOLERO modified its preliminary audit to consider SCSO’s search-related analysis and other matters and reaffirmed its original findings. We provided additional legal analysis of the search and concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support the possibility of exigent circumstances or a search incident to arrest.

Nevertheless, we acknowledge SCSO’s position that whether a search violates the Fourth Amendment is a *legal* issue to be resolved by a court after consideration of the factual record and applicable law, and SCSO therefore believed the need for a judicial legal determination precluded an *administrative* finding by either SCSO or IOLERO on the existing record.

SCSO’s Additional Response: SCSO disagreed with IOLERO’s modified legal analysis of the search, provided additional legal analysis, and reaffirmed its original findings.

X. Independent Investigative Reviews

SCSO Area: Patrol

Case Number: 22-INV-0001

Related SCSO Case Number: 22-AR-0002

Origin of Investigation: IOLERO conducted an independent investigation into the shooting death of David Peláez Chavez. SCSO conducted a separate but parallel Administrative Review of the incident.

Type of Investigation: Independent Investigation

Race or Ethnicity of the Decedent: Unknown

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: An SCSO deputy shot Mr. Peláez Chavez in July 2022, and Mr. Peláez Chavez died from his gunshot wounds. IOLERO conducted an independent investigation to determine whether that deputy, their cover deputy, and their sergeant complied with law and policy before, during, and after the shooting. We investigated the deputies’ efforts to de-escalate; the shooting itself; the cover deputy’s taser use; the sergeant’s supervision of a foot pursuit; and the sergeant’s compliance with sequestering rules. We also evaluated SCSO’s critical incident video.

IOLERO’s Findings: Our report is available on our website: <https://sonomacounty.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/independent-office-of-law-enforcement-review-and-outreach/audits-and-investigations>

1. De-Escalation – No Finding. We concluded that both deputies made significant de-escalation efforts during this incident; but they also missed a number of opportunities to de-escalate, and their efforts suffered as the incident progressed. Among other things, we noted the deputies didn't seek out language resources or crisis intervention resources, didn't identify themselves as law enforcement, made almost no tactical plan, continued a foot pursuit under dangerous circumstances, stopped communicating with each other, and didn't use SCSO's helicopter as a resource. Without the ability to interview the deputies, we concluded that we couldn't determine whether these de-escalation efforts were sufficient.

2. Shooting – No Finding. We concluded that the incident may not have satisfied all of the requirements for using deadly force. Specifically, we concluded that it may not have been reasonable for the deputy to think that Mr. Peláez Chavez was going to "immediately" throw a rock at him; and that it may have been reasonably safe and feasible for the deputy to wait a few more seconds before shooting, in order to allow his cover deputy to fire a taser; but that we couldn't reach a conclusion on these issues without conducting interviews.

3. Taser – Exonerated. We concluded that the cover deputy's reasonable perception of the incident allowed him to use non-deadly force. Law and policy allow non-deadly force in a much broader range of circumstances than deadly force, and those circumstances applied here.

4. Supervision – No Finding. We concluded that the sergeant was required to take command of the foot pursuit, continually assess it, and terminate it if needed; but provided no directions to the deputies and asked the deputies for no information, even though he was aware of circumstances that should cause a supervisor to consider terminating the pursuit. However, we also concluded that there were open questions about the sergeant's actions and a second sergeant's involvement. As a result, we determined that we couldn't reach a conclusion without conducting interviews.

5. Sequestering – No Finding. We concluded that the sergeant didn't sequester the deputies until 4 minutes after he arrived on scene, and during that time the deputies talked about the incident with another witness. However, we also concluded that there were open questions about the sergeant's training, possible reasonable justifications for his delay, and whether he had taken other steps to prevent inappropriate communication. As a result, we determined that we couldn't reach a conclusion without conducting interviews.

6. Critical Incident Video. We concluded that the video included statements that were misleading and erroneous, based on information that was available at the time. These statements had the potential to inappropriately influence the pending investigations and public perception and were ultimately unsupported by SCSO's own Administrative Review and the criminal investigation.

IOLERO's Recommendations: We recommended that SCSO review its Use of Force and De-Escalation policies and training, to ensure that they comply with California law. We also recommended that SCSO use the information learned from this incident to consider whether it provides sufficient training on language resources, crisis intervention resources, tactical

choices in remote/rural environments, and sequestering.

SCSO's Response: None

XI. IOLERO Compliance with Auditing Standards

As detailed in our prior annual reports, IOLERO has been working towards implementing the auditing standards in the Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS), commonly known as the Yellow Book.

One Yellow Book standard is to have an audit plan describing what we audit and how. (GAGAS chapter 8.83.) Because Measure P sets out specific topics and criteria concerning IOLERO's audits, IOLERO has adopted Measure P as the general "audit plan". In each audit, IOLERO (i) assesses Completeness and Timeliness under applicable statutory requirements and the respective Checklists agreed to by IOLERO and SCSO, and (ii) evaluates the substantive issues presented in each case to determine whether IOLERO agrees or disagrees with SCSO's findings.

In accordance with the Yellow Book, IOLERO provides the following certification:

We completed the work described in this annual report in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. IOLERO conducts these audits independently, such that the work reported here reflects our independent conclusions.

XII. Appendices

A. Appendix A: IOLERO Statement Regarding the Triennial Audit 2022-2025

IOLERO STATEMENT IN FOLLOW UP TO THE TRIENNIAL AUDIT 2022-2025

I.

INTRODUCTION

Pivot Consulting Group (Pivot) conducted a comprehensive Audit of the degree to which IOLERO implemented the authorities under Measure P over the three-year period from July 2022 through June 2025.

The Audit also reviewed how the Operational Agreement with the Sheriff's Office and the Letters of Agreement with the law enforcement officers' unions aligned with Measure P and affected this implementation.

The Audit then made several observations and provided 14 "Recommendations" to augment IOLERO's existing oversight functions under Measure P going forward.

II.

AUDIT FINDINGS

The Audit evaluated the scope of IOLERO's implementation of Measure P and made two general findings:

1. From 2022 to 2025 IOLERO "matured into a professional and functioning civilian oversight agency that has substantially implemented the core responsibilities assigned by Measure P." (See Audit at 7; 13–14).
2. Limitations on implementing collateral aspects of Measure P were the result of IOLERO's "practical exercise of existing authorities" flowing from limited staff and resources, and was not based on any limit in the "scope of the authorities granted by Measure P." (See Audit at 7).

CONCLUSION # 1: Establishing Civilian Oversight

IOLERO's Staff worked hard to bring about this result and are proud of this achievement.

We further acknowledge that this could not have been achieved without the professional and good-faith cooperation of SCSO which, despite some disagreements along the way, has demonstrated a broad commitment to the principle of civilian oversight.

By way of background, Measure P's hybrid civilian oversight model combines various authorities to audit, investigate and review law enforcement operations at an institutional level, into a single agency. (See NACOLE Models of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement "Hybrid Civilian Oversight Models and Systems") (https://www.nacole.org/models_of_oversight). The hybrid model is marked chiefly by the substantial breadth of oversight activities afforded to the civilian agency when measured against the more limited oversight authorities exercised under other oversight models.

However, from its early days IOLERO's staffing level did not match the breadth of authorities under Measure P's hybrid model. In July 2022 (the beginning of the Reporting Period) IOLERO had one full-time auditor to conduct all the substantive work required by Measure P. Thus, it was not feasible for IOLERO to effectively carry out the wide array of tasks authorized under Measure P without sacrificing quality and accuracy in each of them, and without rendering IOLERO's oversight work largely performative. A second full-time auditor and a part-time auditor were not added until June 2023.

Accordingly, IOLERO chose in July 2022 to solidify its civilian oversight function by focusing on detailed policy- and law-intensive audits and case-specific reviews. This approach was deliberative and was specifically adapted to the hybrid Measure P oversight model.

Structurally, this approach also afforded the most efficient way to build IOLERO's civilian oversight infrastructure into a permanent and self-sustaining operation governed by objective and transparent standards. Case-specific reviews are a cornerstone of Measure P and the mechanisms for conducting these reviews were substantially in place as of July 2022 under the then-recently executed Operational Agreement with SCSO and Letters of Agreement with the officers' unions.

Moreover, detailed policy-intensive audits of specific factual real-world claims often provide deeper insight into the rationale behind policy and provide a firmer foundation than abstract data alone for identifying institutional culture and trends and crafting recommendations. This method also assesses SCSO's institutional approach to law enforcement in Sonoma County by directly measuring how SCSO applies its policies in practice to County residents with real-life concerns, while taking account that SCSO officers are also subject to real-life concerns when responding to calls for service. This method further develops and preserves IOLERO's on-going institutional knowledge of policy and legal issues for future consistent application, which is a fundamental component of any effective oversight body. (See Audit at 63–64 [individual audits collectively have demonstrated capacity to drive organizational improvement]).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this approach was directly responsive to the unique characteristics of the Sonoma County community. The County consists of concentrated urban areas, geographically expansive rural areas, heavily forested land, extensive coastline, open waters and lakes, and open hills crossing public and private lands—all interspersed with communities of various sizes, interests and demographics. It also contains a single detention facility housing persons from across the County who have been detained by multiple law enforcement jurisdictions, and who have a range of medical and mental health needs. The Sheriff's Office must operate across all these areas where law enforcement encounters vary considerably, and detention interactions are complicated. IOLERO's approach allows it to assess SCSO law enforcement actions across this range of areas and tailor recommendations accordingly.

This approach has been a key component in IOLERO's work to bridge the gap between community expectations and law enforcement (including detention facility) practices. As reflected in NACOLE's principles for effective oversight:

This question ["What makes for effective civilian oversight?"] has been asked by many oversight practitioners, local officials, and community and law enforcement stakeholders. In terms of oversight models, there is generally no singular "best practice" approach that will guarantee success in every instance. Instead, civilian oversight should be structured according [to] what is considered to be a "best-fit" for the particular community interested in establishing civilian oversight.

(See NACOLE, Thirteen Principles for Effective Oversight) (<https://www.nacole.org/principles>).

IOLERO has worked to implement this principle.

CONCLUSION # 2: Limitations on implementing other Measure P provisions was the result of IOLERO's "practical exercise of existing authorities" flowing from limited staff and resources, and it was not based on any limit in the "scope of the authorities granted by Measure P." Broader "performance auditing" of SCSO's institutional performance was similarly limited by resource constraints. (7; 17–18).

Every agency has resource limitations. For IOLERO, Measure P addresses this by specifically providing that IOLERO's exercise of its wide range of authorities is subject to IOLERO's discretion and to staffing resources. As noted in # 1 above, beginning in 2022 IOLERO elected (with success) to leverage its limited staff through case-specific and detailed auditing, which is a primary function of IOLERO under Measure P directly connected to, and flowing from, its statutory role as a receiving agency for citizen complaints. (See Audit at 21–22 [receipt and review of citizen complaints]).

As IOLERO's detailed case-specific review developed in both process and substance, and as IOLERO's staffing increased, IOLERO expanded its implementation of Measure P to conduct independent investigative reviews of two (2) in-custody deaths which were completed in November 2024. These addressed SCSO detention facility operations, including access to medical care and constitutional issues, at a broader level than is otherwise generally conducted in the more circumscribed allegation-driven case-specific audit. (See Audit at 54–57).

IOLERO also conducted an independent investigative review of an officer-involved shooting during the Audit reporting period, although the resulting report was issued outside the Audit reporting period. IOLERO further docketed three "whistleblower" claims which were held in abeyance during the Audit reporting period while litigation progressed over IOLERO's subpoena authority in such matters.

IOLERO intends to continue independent investigative reviews and whistleblower investigations going forward in a deliberative manner building on prior work product.

Ideally, IOLERO would also like to supplement its existing oversight work using what are generally called "performance audits". These provide a quantitative measure of how well an agency is implementing specifically designated criteria and usually involves reviewing a statistically representative sample of objectively defined records to determine how compliant an agency is in documenting data or carrying out a task. The results are generally reflected as a percentage – e.g., the records showed the agency documented the required information 90% of the time. Performance audits require (i) a properly defined issue and scope that can be measured quantitatively, and (ii) access to a sufficient sample of records to conduct a statistically valid assessment.

Development and implementation of "performance audits", and other authorities identified in Measure P (including civil litigation review, items of public interest, ad hoc reporting, and development of policy recommendations) will require a continued deliberative approach in order to balance and manage IOLERO's resources.

The Audit noted the efficacy of performance audits citing three jurisdictions as examples: the Los Angeles Office of Inspector General, the San Francisco Department of Police Accountability, and the Oakland Office of Inspector General. These agencies are large and developed organizations in major metropolitan areas with much larger resources and procedures that have been developed over longer periods. (See Audit at 17–18).

IOLERO worked hard to establish itself as a permanent civilian oversight agency during the Audit period. Nevertheless, it is still nascent in relation to these other agencies and will require time to develop and implement procedures for performance audits and other review functions as resources allow. (See Audit at 19 [“additional staffing and resources would enhance IOLERO’s capacity to fully implement certain oversight activities” including jail operations and systemic reviews; Recommendation # 2 at 32 [develop formal risk-based planning for systemic reviews “as resources permit”]). During this transition period, IOLERO will continue engagement with SCSO to develop a more streamlined complaint intake process. Ongoing development of substantive policy and legal issues will also result in more efficient audits of cases by newer auditors involving issues that have already been subjected to detailed analysis.

IOLERO expects that these efforts, along with the addition of two auditors in the summer of 2025, will supplement resources for IOLERO to continue implementation of the other Measure P authorities without sacrificing quality and accuracy of existing responsibilities which, as the Audit found, lie at the core of the civilian oversight process built by IOLERO during the reporting period. (See Audit at 74 [balance audit priority with organizational impact to prioritize audit framework]).

III.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Audit also identified opportunities to address IOLERO’s practical limitations in order to strengthen implementation of Measure P. (p.7). These are:

1. Increased communication with SCSO and the County regarding access to information;
2. Early coordination between IOLERO and SCSO during investigations; and
3. Development of procedures to support consistent application of audit expectations.

We discuss each.

OPPORTUNITY # 1: Increased communication with SCSO and the County regarding access to information. (See Audit at 37–42 and Recommendation # 4 [clarify process for accessing prior complaint and disciplinary material]).

Under the NACOLE principles of civilian law enforcement oversight, “unfettered access to the subject law enforcement agency’s records is vitally important for effective civilian oversight. The ability to review all records relevant to an investigation or other matters within the scope of a civilian oversight agency’s authority in a timely manner is essential to providing effective, informed, and fact-driven oversight.” (See Audit at 78–82 [noting differing views on procedural and substantive issues concerning information access]).

Measure P echoes this by requiring SCSO to provide IOLERO with “direct, unfettered access” to SCSO information to facilitate IOLERO’s receipt, review and audit of complaints, IOLERO’s independent investigative reviews, and IOLERO’s review of policies, practices and training. (See Measure P § 2-394(g)).

Thus, under both Measure P and the NACOLE principles, the operative issue is whether IOLERO had “unfettered access” to SCSO information that is “relevant” to the oversight agency’s investigation, review or audit.

As the Audit observed, there is some difference in opinion about whether “unfettered access” to materials “relevant” to a matter being reviewed by IOLERO means (i) access to specific information that is relevant to a specific audit, investigation, review or analysis actually being

undertaken by IOLERO, or (ii) IOLERO would have general access to SCSO information for future use, determined by IOLERO alone, without the need for a showing of “relevance” to a specific review being conducted.

This distinction lies at the heart of the public discussion concerning what “unfettered access” means under Measure P. This issue will be the subject of review going forward and will be addressed in the longer-term by the permanent Director when appointed. Accordingly, we do not address this debate here.

For present purposes, we limit this discussion to IOLERO’s information access under (i) above: e.g., access to information relevant to specific reviews actually being conducted by IOLERO during the Reporting Period.

a. Case-specific audits/reviews/investigations. IOLERO generally received access to relevant materials when conducting case-specific audits and reviews, and SCSO generally provided access to additional materials when requested by IOLERO. Information access in this context has not been an issue.

b. Whistleblower Cases. Disagreement arose between IOLERO and SCSO in connection with the issuance of subpoenas by IOLERO in whistleblower cases, based on the agencies’ respective reading of the relevant agreements, Measure P and state law. This was resolved through the court process and is no longer at issue. Unfortunately, the legal complexity of this question did not lend itself to resolution through communication alone, but IOLERO is positioned to work collaboratively with SCSO now that this issue has been clarified by judicial review.

c. Performance Audits. Because IOLERO has not yet sought to conduct a “performance audit” on any specific issue, IOLERO has not requested access to SCSO information necessary to conduct such an audit.

d. Receipt and Review of Citizen Complaints. IOLERO’s practice has been to send to SCSO every citizen complaint received by IOLERO, even where the allegations appeared facially without merit, requiring SCSO to issue a case number and investigate the matter. SCSO has raised legitimate concerns about the impact on its own limited resources and diversion of its staff from cases with more substantive issues. IOLERO is collaborating with SCSO to address this process. This could include agreed-upon access to relevant SCSO information.

e. Administrative Interviews. Measure P provides that IOLERO’s Director may “personally sit and observe the investigative interviews of any complainant or witness in, or deputy who is a subject of, [an] administrative investigation, upon request by the director”. (§ 2-394(f)). (See Audit at 82–85 [addressing procedure for observing interviews]).

To facilitate this, in 2022 SCSO equipped a room at its offices from which the Director could observe interviews through closed-circuit monitoring and provide SCSO questioners additional queries to be submitted to the interviewee.

We are not aware of a prior instance where this capability has been utilized in practice. But even if the next Director utilizes this mechanism, there are logistical barriers to be addressed. First, IOLERO is not notified of any investigation based on a complaint that was submitted directly to SCSO until after SCSO’s investigation is completed, rendering this option moot in such cases. Second, for IOLERO-originated cases, the Operational Agreement provides that the Director “may contact the Sheriff’s Office for periodic updates or access Sheriff’s Office records to monitor the investigation’s progress”. However, it is difficult to determine from the complaint alone which matters raise significant issues meriting Director request for updates and

attendance at an interview except for a handful of self-evident matters such as (for example) officer involved shootings. Third, the logistics of such observations need to be clarified in advance concerning, for example, how direct and follow up questions are to be submitted. Finally, this mechanism is inapplicable if SCSO does not conduct an administrative interview.

IOLERO's request to administratively interview law enforcement personnel through use of a general civil subpoena has also generated conflict. A law enforcement officer is entitled to invoke their 5th Amendment right in response to a subpoena. While SCSO in its capacity as an employer may administratively direct an employee to answer questions (known as a *Lybarger* directive), IOLERO is not a deputy's employer. SCSO has taken the position that it cannot direct officers to testify to IOLERO under a *Lybarger* directive unless/until the County and the officers' unions "meet and confer" under labor law.

Thus, the *Lybarger* and labor law issues related to directing officers to administratively testify to IOLERO are not readily amendable at this time to resolution through informal communication between SCSO, IOLERO and the County outside the "meet and confer" process.

Nevertheless, the agencies are well-positioned to engage on identifying mechanisms that could reduce the need for *Lybarger*-related interviews and which could, in some appropriate cases, eliminate the need for such interviews altogether. This could include access to additional informational sources (including records and witnesses) from which a record may be sufficiently developed to reach a conclusion on specific issues even absent an employee's testimony. In all instances, of course, the employee must always retain their due process right to provide information through an administrative interview, and there may be instances where they may be inclined to do so pursuant to an SCSO *Lybarger* directive if sufficient protections are in place as agreed to by IOLERO and SCSO.

OPPORTUNITY # 2: Early coordination between IOLERO and SCSO during investigations.

As noted above, IOLERO transmits all citizen complaints to SCSO for investigation. The volume of complaints and the vagueness of many of the allegations has placed a significant burden on SCSO's Internal Affairs investigative Staff on the front end, and on IOLERO's auditing Staff on the back end. (See Recommendation # 3 at 32–33 [establish case notification and coordination process]; 86–87 [discussing direct communication between IOLERO and SCSO staff during auditing and investigative phases rather than post-audit]).

IOLERO has been working with SCSO over the past year to narrow and focus the scope of allegations to be investigated.

These discussions set in motion SCSO's use of narrower "short-form" investigation reports on claims that are largely based on factual assertions that can usually be resolved through a cursory review of records or video, giving SCSO flexibility and the ability to operate more efficiently in appropriate cases. In accordance with the Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS), IOLERO audits these "short-form" investigative reports under the same standards as other investigations with the scope of auditing review tailored to the narrower scope of the allegations.

IOLERO has also met with SCSO to outline the issues to be reviewed during independent investigative reviews. IOLERO and SCSO have not yet reached agreement on this point, but IOLERO is prepared to continue this dialogue and to engage with SCSO to proactively address any issues identified by SCSO.

OPPORTUNITY # 3: Develop procedures to support consistent application of audit expectations.

Beginning in 2022, IOLERO developed and implemented specific standards by which SCSO investigations would be measured. These standards were (i) “Completeness” which originate from the Penal Code and (ii) “Timeliness” which is statutorily derived from the Government Code and augmented by voluntary agreement between the agencies, and (iii) substantive findings—Exonerated, Unfounded, Sustained, or Not Sustained—which are derived from the Penal Code (except for “Not Sustained” which derives from U.S. Department of Justice guidelines, SCSO policy, and law enforcement oversight best practices).

During the first year of the Reporting Period all audits were conducted by a single auditor and approved by the Director, providing internal consistency in the establishment and application of standards. The addition of 1.5 auditors in the summer of 2023, and the lack of a managerial auditor below the Director during the following two years to coordinate auditing work-product, resulted in disparate application of standards in some cases which SCSO has correctly noted.

IOLERO is taking steps to ensure that all audits are subjected to the same standards and audit expectations. This includes the substantive findings, the scope of the investigation (Completeness), and the diligence with which the investigation is conducted (Timeliness). IOLERO is also enforcing the Timeliness standards against IOLERO’s own auditing procedures, identifying when IOLERO fails to meet the standard. (See Audit at 53 and Recommendation # 7 [differentiate investigative sufficiency from opportunities for improvement]).

IV.

PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN IOLERO AND SCSO

The Audit reviewed the level and quality of direct communications between IOLERO and SCSO as contemplated under § 2-394(g) of Measure P. Because of its importance, the Audit’s conclusion is quoted in more detail:

During the review period, the office [IOLERO] communicated directly with Sheriff’s Office personnel in connection with audits, requests for information, and independent investigations. Interviews indicated that these communications generally occurred through formal channels, primarily by email, with occasional telephone conversations to address specific case related issues or requests for clarification.

While these communications supported the completion of individual audits and investigations, they remained largely transactional and focused on specific matters rather than broader organizational engagement. The review found that opportunities for regular professional dialogue, collaborative problem solving, strategic planning, and relationship building outside the context of individual cases have not yet been consistently exercised or fully developed.

(Audit at 86).

The Audit also noted “friction” between IOLERO and SCSO regarding the scope and implementation of Measure P, but nevertheless observed that “both organizations continue to perform their respective responsibilities professionally and that meaningful improvements have been achieved despite these areas of disagreement.” (Audit at 88).

RECOMMENDATION: **The Audit recommended an expanded and structured collaboration between IOLERO and SCSO personnel, including IOLERO staff attendance at SCSO training on issues relevant to IOLERO’s oversight, periodic meetings to discuss**

audits, investigations, and issues, and possible joint actions to be taken by both agencies.

IOLERO acknowledges that respective agencies can fall prey to a tendency to mistakenly view the other's good faith questioning or objection to an issue as somehow "resisting" the work of the agency.

IOLERO is not immune from this tendency of mistakenly viewing good faith objections as somehow reflecting "obstruction". To be sure, law enforcement's initial reluctance to submit to public scrutiny is often a major reason why communities decide to create an independent oversight agency. However, once created, the civilian oversight agency itself (IOLERO included) must be responsive to changing needs and move to the next stage of development by addressing substantive issues. This requires focused oversight agency analysis on both procedural and substantive issues, administrative, and institutional matters.

Residual law enforcement reluctance to oversight must, of course, be factored into the oversight agency's ongoing work. But care must be taken to distinguish between (i) legitimate issues raised by oversight work, on the one hand, and (ii) law enforcement resistance to oversight, on the other hand. They are not the same thing.

Such disagreements can be reduced significantly through increased dialogue. For example, an oversight agency might modify a request for information that is desired (but not necessary) to evaluating an issue, in response to the administrative burden placed on law enforcement by the request. Law enforcement, in turn, might accommodate a broader request when the oversight agency identifies unique circumstances justifying the burden imposed. However, if instead of collaboratively discussing this issue each agency simply retreated to their respective corner without communication, each is more likely to view the other as obstructionist.

But civilian oversight is not a boxing match, and it cannot succeed if it is treated as one by either, or both, entities. Adequate communication would enable resolution of many such issues based on a common understanding of what is, and what is not, being requested and provided.

Of course, instances will arise where disagreements on principle cannot be bridged through dialogue alone. That is not surprising. In such cases, each entity will take appropriate steps to resolve the issue which could include judicial action. Each agency may also state their positions publicly, so the community is aware of the issue. But to fulfill the higher purposes of civilian oversight, all such communications should be measured, objective and professional.

Now that IOLERO has successfully implemented an oversight model through its auditing and investigative review function, communications between IOLERO and SCSO can and should go beyond the case-specific audit or investigative review context in a proactive manner.

Going forward, we hope to expand communications to address the entirety of the oversight process, including engaging on refinement of issue-identification, continued transparency and consistency in auditing and investigative standards.

V.

JAIL OVERSIGHT

The Audit found that IOLERO has fully implemented Measure P's jail oversight authorities but the current process—auditing SCSO investigations or conducting independent investigative reviews of incidents—is (as in the patrol operations) largely retrospective and driven by past events. (See Audit at 95–99).

To build upon the "strong foundation" already developed by IOLERO in jail oversight functions, the Audit recommends hiring two additional staff as "dedicated jail monitors" who would (i)

conduct grievance reviews (ii) conduct early monitoring of mortality reviews (iii) conduct routine facility visits (iv) conduct systemic analysis of jail conditions and (v) release regular public reports.

As noted earlier, IOLERO has addressed detention facility issues through its audit and investigative function, resulting in the development of policy recommendations and identification of detention-specific issues. This has included detailed review of Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) claims, strip search protocols, classification and housing, safety checks, use of observational cells, booking and release procedures, access to medical and mental health care, access to telephones, cleanliness/sanitariness of the facility, and uses of force—to name a few.

As the Audit noted, and as we have described in our prior Annual Reports, detention facility issues differ materially from those raised in the patrol environment. Among other things the detention environment has (i) multiple layers of legal and administrative requirements (operational and facility-design) including state regulations not otherwise applicable to the patrol environment; (ii) a requirement to provide constitutionally adequate medical care to incarcerated individuals and to comply with standards issued by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC); and (iii) constitutional requirements concerning the overall conditions of confinement (which includes, by way of example only, inmate safety, access to hygiene, out of cell opportunities, and food quality). The constitutional issues are further complicated by differences in the constitutional standards applicable to persons incarcerated after conviction, and those incarcerated while awaiting trial (pre-trial detainees).

IOLERO agrees with the Audit that IOLERO's jail oversight can be complimented and expanded through the hiring of additional staff dedicated to jail oversight issues and processes. Doing so is not an issue of IOLERO's willingness. Rather, it is an issue of increasing funding to accommodate this aspiration.

Until additional funding is achieved, IOLERO will continue to audit and investigate jail issues under its current detailed model as expertise is developed in this area.

V.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATION

IOLERO Staff worked hard in the 2022-2025 Reporting Period to establish an effective civilian oversight operation in accordance with the directives of Measure P. This achievement could not have been made without the professional and good-faith cooperation and engagement of SCSO and its general commitment to civilian oversight.

IOLERO had some starts-and-stops along the way, and the Audit has identified opportunities and recommendations to augment IOLERO's oversight going forward.

As the IOLERO Interim Director, I am committed to working with SCSO during this transition to maintain the agencies' joint accomplishments, and build on them where possible, in order to present the next permanent Director with the fullest opportunity to advance civilian law enforcement oversight in Sonoma County.

Matthew Chavez
IOLERO Interim Director
September 2026

B. Appendix B: SCSO Response to FY 2025-26 IOLERO Annual Report



SONOMA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

EDDIE ENGRAM

Sheriff-Coroner

September 8, 2026

RE: Response to FY 2025-26 IOLERO Annual Report

The FY 2025-26 Annual Report reflects real progress in the working relationship between IOLERO and the Sheriff's Office. I appreciate IOLERO's recognition of the professionalism and diligence of our Professional Standards staff. The report also identifies areas where both agencies can improve. That is the purpose of effective oversight.

The results speak for themselves. IOLERO found 60 of 66 audited investigations, or 91%, complete, compared with 73% the prior year. No investigation was found incomplete in its entirety. IOLERO agreed with the Sheriff's Office's findings in 58 of 66 cases, or 88%. Of the eight cases where there was some disagreement, only one involved a substantive disagreement on the merits. These numbers matter. They show that the two agencies are increasingly applying the same standards and reaching the same conclusions.

Completeness Findings

Language matters. A "Partially Incomplete" finding can easily be understood to mean that the entire investigation was inadequate. I appreciate IOLERO making clear that this is not what the finding means. In each of the six cases, IOLERO determined that some allegations were completely investigated but believed that one or more specific issues could have been more fully developed.

PIVOT identified the same issue. It recommended distinguishing between a deficiency that affects the reliability of an investigative conclusion and an opportunity to make a good investigation better. I support developing an agreed upon approach that clearly explains that difference. A revised category or short explanation in each audit would give employees, complainants, County leadership, and the public a more accurate understanding of the findings

Complaint Intake, Scope, And Timeliness

Both agencies met every Timeliness Checklist requirement in 71% of the matters to which the checklist applied. The identical rate reflects increased workloads and limited staffing in both offices. The best way to improve that number is to identify the allegations and scope of the investigation at the beginning, not after the investigation is completed.

The Sheriff's Office recommended this approach in our response to the FY 2024-25 Annual Report. Before a complaint is referred, the agencies should confirm that it concerns a Sheriff's Office employee, includes the available contact and incident information, and identifies specific alleged misconduct. The agencies should then consult on the allegations and the law or policy that applies. I am pleased that this work has started. The Sheriff's Office is using expedited forms for uncomplicated matters, and IOLERO is applying auditing standards appropriate to those investigations. This is practical progress that should reduce unnecessary work and improve timeliness for both agencies.

Whistleblower Investigations

The whistleblower matters remained on hold while the courts resolved a legitimate question about IOLERO's authority. The issue was not whether the Sheriff's Office supports lawful whistleblower investigations. It was how IOLERO's subpoena authority under Measure P interacted with the County's Letters of Agreement with the Deputy Sheriffs' Association and the Sonoma County Law Enforcement Association. Those agreements were negotiated through the required meet-and-confer process and govern important procedures and protections for represented employees.

The courts have now confirmed IOLERO's subpoena authority, and the Sheriff's Office is glad the issue has been resolved. We will comply with lawfully issued subpoenas and cooperate with IOLERO to complete the pending investigations, consistent with the court's ruling. The focus now should be on completing these matters fairly, professionally, and without unnecessary delay.

Response to IOLERO Audit Recommendations

IOLERO made recommendations to the sheriff's office during audits. Some of the recommendations are not timely as the audits were older and SCSO policies have changed since the original complaint. Those issues are not addressed in this section.

Case 2024-000346

IOLERO's Recommendations: Because the claim addresses what would be a criminal activity were it proved true, we recommended that SCSO review its policies to determine whether the administrative investigation is a sufficient "gatekeeper" for such allegations or whether a preliminary criminal review is more appropriate. We also reiterated the recommendation (shared by SCSO) that video cameras be installed in all modules.

I appreciate IOLERO's conclusion that this investigation was complete and timely and its agreement that the allegation was factually unfounded. IOLERO recommended that the Sheriff's Office consider whether a preliminary criminal review should occur whenever an allegation, if proven, could constitute criminal conduct. We respectfully disagree with that recommendation in this case.

Administrative and criminal investigations serve different purposes. In an administrative investigation, the Sheriff's Office can order employees to provide statements, subject to Lybarger/Garrity protections. In a criminal investigation, an employee cannot be compelled to provide a potentially incriminating statement. Starting with the administrative investigation

allowed us to obtain the fullest available account and determine whether the evidence supported a separate criminal inquiry.

This approach does not prevent criminal review. If credible evidence of criminal conduct is developed, we will initiate or refer the matter for a separate criminal investigation and ensure that compelled administrative statements are not used improperly. That was not the evidence in this case. After reviewing reports, logs, grievances, witness interviews, deputy interviews, and written responses from other staff, both agencies agreed that the allegation was unfounded. The administrative investigation was the appropriate process.

The Sheriff's Office continues to support installing video cameras in all housing modules. The project remains dependent on capital funding, but there is no disagreement about its value. Cameras will improve evidence preservation, accountability, and safety.

Case Number: 23-C-0071

IOLERO's Recommendations: The written notice about an inmate's right to telephone required by Penal Code § 851.5 be posted in sobering cells.

SCSO Response: Signs posted.

Case Number: 25-PP-0006

IOLERO's Recommendations: We provided RECOMMENDATIONS for addressing a training gap concerning restrictions on assisting in the enforcement of civil immigration laws, which included: 1) having designated staff/supervisors handle all ICE requests, and 2) training for all MADF Staff on how to respond to requests for public information by immigration authorities after a person has been released from custody. The training should include instruction on the specific requirements of the Values Act and limitations on cooperation with federal authorities imposed by County and SCSO Policy.

SCSO Response: Training schedule updated.

Case Number: 25-C-0011

Allegations or Issues Reviewed: The complainant reported that they were robbed. At the scene, a deputy searched the complainant's backpack and arrested the complainant for drug-related items found during the search. The complainant alleged that the backpack search was illegal, and that the deputy did not take a report about the robbery. SCSO discovered additional possible allegations that the deputy had written incomplete reports for the incident or had included false or misleading statements in their reports.

IOLERO's Preliminary Conclusion: IOLERO DISAGREED with SCSO's search-related findings. We concluded that the deputy searched the complainant's backpack without a warrant or an exception to the warrant requirement, making the search unlawful and unreasonable. As a result, we concluded that a preponderance of the evidence supported a finding of SUSTAINED under the Fourth Amendment / search policy, and under the policy regarding lawful police powers.

IOLERO's Recommendations: IOLERO recommended additional training on search warrant exceptions for the deputy and two other SCSO members and made recommendations for improving future IA investigations that challenge the lawfulness of a search.

SCSO Response:

The Sheriff's Office respectfully disagrees with IOLERO's conclusion regarding the legality of the search.

We recognize and respect IOLERO's role in reviewing and auditing administrative investigations. At the same time, whether a search violates the Fourth Amendment is ultimately a legal question. In a criminal case, those questions are generally addressed through the courts under Penal Code section 1538.5, where a judge can consider the full factual record, applicable case law, and any recognized exceptions to the warrant requirement.

In this case, the Sheriff's Office carefully reviewed the available evidence and considered whether recognized exceptions to the warrant requirement, including search incident to arrest and exigent circumstances, could apply. Based on the evidence available, we could not conclude by a preponderance of the evidence that the deputy violated policy. For that reason, Not Sustained remains the appropriate finding.

IOLERO is entitled to reach a different conclusion in its audit. However, a difference in legal analysis does not, by itself, establish that the search was unlawful. Constitutional questions involving the legality of a search are appropriately resolved through the judicial process, where the facts and applicable law can be fully considered.

For these reasons, the Sheriff's Office reaffirms its original findings. We also respectfully decline the recommended search-related training because that recommendation is based on IOLERO's conclusion that the search was unlawful; a conclusion the Sheriff's Office does not share and that has not been established through judicial review.

Pivot Triennial Review

The PIVOT audit reinforces this progress. Although the audit focused on IOLERO's implementation of Measure P, it found that Sheriff's Office investigations now routinely identify and apply the relevant law and department policy. It also found that the two agencies have made meaningful progress toward a common analytical framework through the jointly developed Completeness Checklist. PIVOT recognized that both agencies continued to perform their responsibilities professionally and made improvements despite areas of disagreement.

PIVOT also recognized that the Sheriff's Office has taken IOLERO's recommendations seriously. We have reviewed those recommendations and, when warranted, changed our policies and practices. Those changes include canine policy, body-worn camera guidance, detention procedures, conflict-of-interest practices, telephone access, jail-video preservation, and complaint handling. PIVOT found no evidence that the Sheriff's Office intentionally withheld relevant information in the publicly available matters it reviewed or denied an IOLERO request to observe an administrative interview. The audit further concluded that delays in IOLERO's implementation of other Measure P authorities resulted from deliberate decisions made beginning in July 2022 in response to practical resource constraints, not from a lack of authority.

Continued Collaboration

The annual report and PIVOT review point to the same next step: regular, structured communication between IOLERO and Sheriff's Office personnel. I support case-coordination meetings, early discussion of investigative scope, IOLERO participation in selected training, periodic review of recurring issues, and a transparent process for tracking recommendations and our responses. These steps can reduce misunderstandings and improve the quality and timeliness of both investigations and audits.

My position is straightforward. I support meaningful civilian oversight. I support IOLERO having the tools necessary to perform its work within the law. I also support clear legal boundaries, fair investigations, and the rights of employees. Those principles are not mutually exclusive. The progress documented this year shows what can be accomplished when both agencies communicate directly, apply clear standards, and remain focused on accountability and public trust.

EDDIE ENGRAM

Sheriff-Coroner

C. Appendix C: CAC Member Biographies

First District



Susy Martes

Susy Martes is a dedicated community advocate and active volunteer in Sonoma Valley, bringing a strong commitment to service, mentorship, and community engagement. She currently serves as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), where she advocates for the best interests of foster youth by working closely with social workers, educators, and caregivers to ensure each child's voice is heard.

Susy is also a long-time mentor with the Sonoma Valley Mentoring Alliance and serves on its Development Board, supporting fundraising and community outreach efforts that benefit local youth programs. Through these roles, she has built meaningful relationships across the community and developed a deep understanding of the needs of families and underserved populations.

She retired after a 25-year career in a high-level executive marketing role with Time Warner / HBO, where she led strategic sales and marketing initiatives, managed national teams, and built strong client partnerships. This professional background brings valuable expertise in communication, strategy, and relationship-building to her community work.

As a member of the Community Advisory Council, Susy is passionate about fostering transparency, building trust, and ensuring that community voices are represented in oversight and public safety conversations.



Nathan Solomon

Mr. Solomon holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Master of Science in Computer Information Systems. In college he was first introduced to the psychology of policing when taking coursework from Craig Haney who helped conduct the Stanford Prison experiments. He currently works as a Senior Information Security Analyst for Jackson Family Wines. Nathan has over 25 years of experience in IT working various roles including founding his own

software company.

Nathan is a native of Sonoma County and has lived in Santa Rosa for the past 20 years. He has a 22-year-old son and wife of twenty-six years who was raised in Santa Rosa. Nathan's interest in serving on the Community Advisory Council for IOLERO stems from the Andy Lopez homicide primarily and the recognition that we as a community have to do better.

Nathan lives in Sonoma County's first district represented by Supervisor Rebecca Hermosillo.

Second District

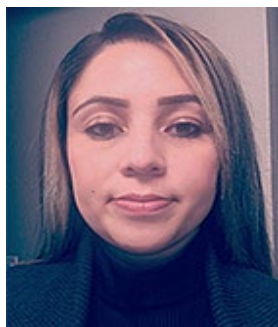


Casey Jones

I'm the son of an Air Force pilot veteran of the Second World War. I was raised in Southern Cal and came north to attend UC Berkeley. I graduated from UC Law San Francisco, and practiced business litigation in San Francisco for 10 years. I fled north to find a sane balance between work, marriage, child raising and personal life. I was Assistant City Attorney for the City of Napa for 26 years, retiring at the end of 2022. My practice included advice to and advocacy for city officials and initiatives at all levels. I worked closely with city

management and police command staff and line officers in all aspects of law enforcement, including policy development, training, accountability, liability claims, litigation, and trial. I believe that law enforcement is a crucial, complex cornerstone of our self-governance, and that citizen oversight is vital to law enforcement's health, effectiveness, and responsiveness to the needs of citizens. Since retiring I'm providing legal services to other lawyers' part time, continuing to coach high school mock trial as I have for many years, reading, writing, cooking, drinking good beer and wine, and trying to break 70 on the golf course.

Third District



Lorena Barrera

Ms. Barrera attended the University of California, Merced, where she received a bachelor's degree in political science. Following her graduation, she moved to Sonoma County to attend Sonoma State University as a graduate student in the field of Public Administration. In 2016, she received her master's degree.

While in school, Lorena served as a volunteer in various internships in all levels of government. During this time, she became aware of the disconnect between people and their representatives and how this disconnect contributes to a lack of understanding in what government does or should be doing for people. Around this time, Lorena began working as a staffer for a member of Congress where she was exposed to policy analysis and became more aware of the loopholes that exist in policy that affect both the public and the public agencies.

As a minority in society, setting an example in the community is of great importance to Ms. Barrera. She believes in informing and educating people in order to strengthen communities.

As a resident of Sonoma County, Ms. Barrera seeks opportunities that will allow her to serve as a community representative because she cares about making a difference for everyone. Ms. Barrera has served on Sonoma County's Commission for the Status of Women (CSW) since 2015 where she currently serves as the vice-chair. As a member of the CSW, she served on the CSW's Mental Health Ad Hoc Committee where she did research on mental health and the stigmas that surround mental health conditions. Ms. Barrera brings to the CAC her experience studying mental health conditions and she will be instrumental in integrating that information into the CAC's outreach and policy work.



Trevor Ward

As a native of Sonoma County, my passion for politics and community service began in high school through my involvement in competitive speech and policy debate. I studied music, political science and history at Santa Rosa Junior College and leadership at the University Of the Nations in Kona, Hawaii.

After that, I worked with Youth with A Mission in Los Angeles where I had the privilege of serving on a short-term outreach trip to the Philippines and Thailand and then leading two separate trips to Costa Rica and Panama. My roles during that time covered everything from working at an orphanage, to partnering with an anti-human trafficking organization and building a new service campus in the jungle.

From my early childhood until now, my heart and priority have always been to serve those who are poor and most vulnerable. Like many Americans, my passion for police oversight began after the murder of George Floyd in 2020. I was an activist and strong supporter of Measure P which established broader authority for the Independent Office of Law Enforcement Review and Outreach.

I had the honor and privilege of being appointed to the Community Advisory Council in the Fall of 2023 to represent District 3 (central Santa Rosa). While our work covers a broad range of topics, my greatest passion and hope is to serve individuals at the Sonoma County Jail and to make sure that we are giving them the best care and rehabilitation possible.

Fourth District



John Azevedo

John Azevedo is a life-long resident of Sonoma County having grown up on a ranch near Healdsburg, California. John still lives near Healdsburg with his wife Alicia and daughter Micaela. As the Senior Vice President of Farming for Jackson Family Wines (JFW), he has responsibility for vineyard teams and vineyards all over coastal California. John continues to manage his family's vineyard in addition to his responsibilities at Jackson family Wines.

John has been involved with various community groups and holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from California State University at Fresno in Plant Science with an emphasis in viticulture. He is also a graduate of the California Agricultural Leadership Program class 37, where he had the opportunity to visit Asia in conjunction with consulting with other international agricultural leaders. John has a commitment to the community that includes strong beliefs in equity, safety, and the process of continual improvement, all of which drove his interest in participating with the CAC.



Michael Miller

Michael Miller grew up in the East Bay. He graduated from Chabot Junior College with an AA degree in the Administration of Justice. He worked as a police officer from 1974-1984 in San Mateo with assignments throughout the San Francisco Peninsula. He was involved in two shootings. He was sued twice for unfounded allegations of excessive force, with both being dismissed. His nephew was killed by an Antioch police officer in an excessive force situation. He moved to Santa Rosa in 1983. While working full time for Big 4 Rents and as a legal research clerk he attended night law school at

Empire College School of Law, graduating *magna cum laude* in 1988 as the valedictorian of his class. Since then, he has worked as a general civil litigator, having tried over 70 cases to jury verdict in a host of subjects, including defending law enforcement in excessive force cases. In 1997 he was a founding partner in the Santa Rosa law firm Perry, Johnson, Anderson, Miller & Moskowitz LLP which has become the largest law firm north of the Golden Gate Bridge. He has extensive volunteer experience as a Big Brother and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) with 5 different youths over a nearly 20-year span. He has also been active with local efforts promoting equity and inclusion, meeting weekly since George Floyd's murder with a mixed-race group of elders striving to figure out ways to meaningfully impact the community in positive ways for the benefit of all.

Fifth District



Nancy Pemberton

Nancy Pemberton obtained her B.A. degree at San Francisco State University and her J.D. degree at Berkeley Law School (then known as Boalt Hall). For most of her legal career, she specialized in representing defendants charged with capital crimes and facing possible execution, both as an attorney and mitigation specialist. Now, retired from legal representation, she works part-time writing and editing content for a website used by capital litigators.

As part of her litigation practice, Ms. Pemberton volunteered time to train attorneys and investigators in capital litigation issues, presenting at legal and investigative conferences and seminars throughout the country. She also taught a clinical course, the Art of Investigation, at Santa Clara University Law School in conjunction with the Law School's Innocence Project.

In 2000, Ms. Pemberton and a fellow investigator co-founded the Institute for International Criminal Investigations (IICI), an organization that trains professionals in the investigation of human atrocities. She continues to sit on the IICI board. She also sat on the board of the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California for many years, including chairing the board for six of those years.

Having moved to Sonoma County in 2014, Ms. Pemberton became involved in the campaign to pass the Evelyn Cheatham Effective IOLERO Ordinance, also known as Measure P, adopted in November 2020 with the approval of almost 2/3 of the vote. She now serves on the Committee

for Law Enforcement Accountability Now (CLEAN), a group dedicated to ensuring the robust implementation of Measure P.

Ms. Pemberton is delighted to serve on the Community Advisory Council. She believes that it is the responsibility of everyone in a democracy to oversee the people in law enforcement to whom they have granted such enormous responsibility and authority; and she aspires to live in a community where law enforcement officers and the people they serve view each other with mutual respect and trust. She looks forward to doing her part to achieve those goals.

Ms. Pemberton lives in Sonoma County's Fifth District represented by Supervisor Lynda Hopkins.

XIII. Reference Links

National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE)

[Thirteen Principles for Effective Oversight](#)

[Models of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement — Hybrid Civilian Oversight Models and Systems](#)

Independent Office of Law Enforcement Review and Outreach (IOLERO)

[Publicly Reportable Audits and Investigations](#)

[Pivot Consulting Group Triennial Review](#)

Sonoma County Sheriff's Office (SCSO)

[SB 1421 Records and Information](#)

Sonoma County Behavioral Health

[Mobile Crisis Services](#)

Community Advisory Council (CAC)

[CAC Annual Work Plans and Ad Hoc Committees](#)

Budget and Fiscal Resources

[IOLERO / Sonoma County FY 2026–2027 Budget Reports](#)