

# Summary of Civilian Review Models



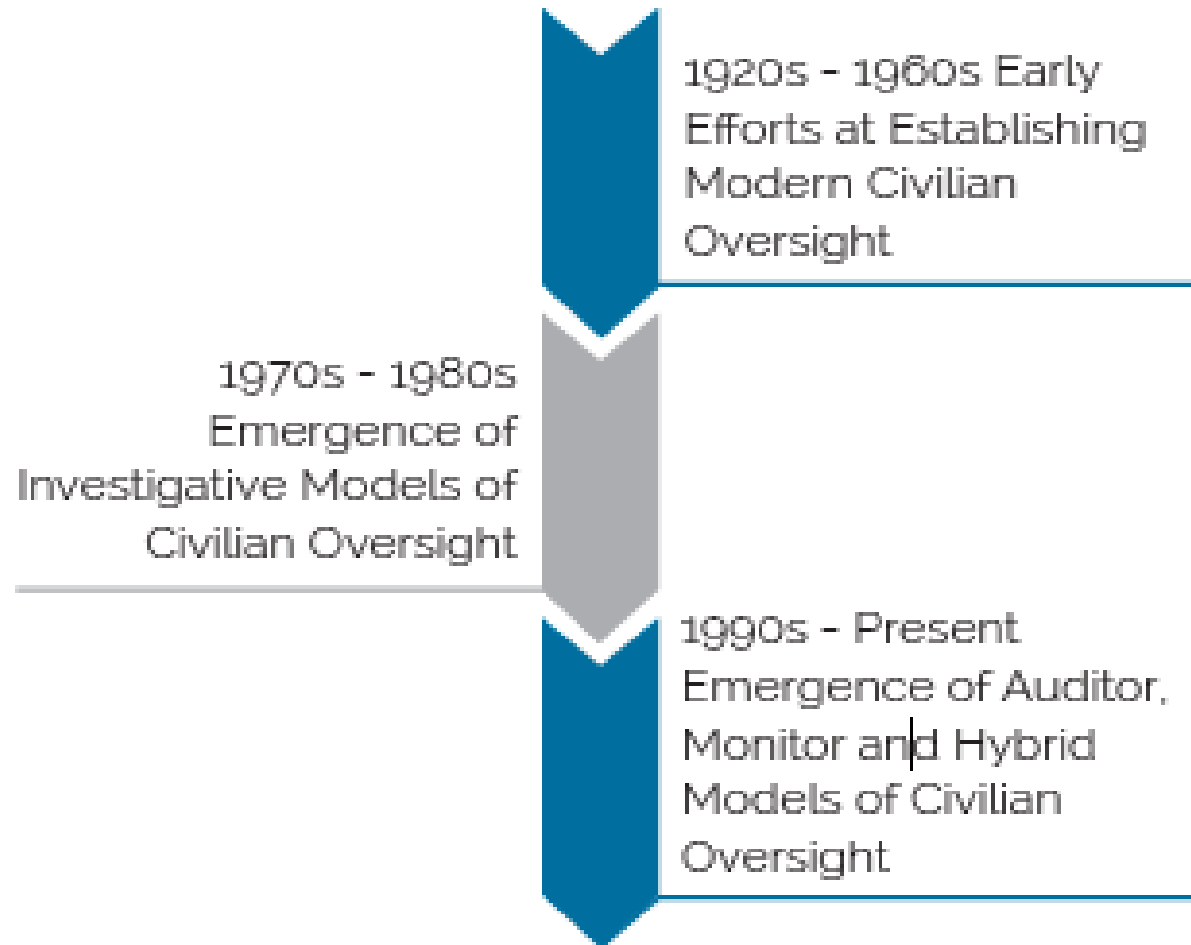
May 29, 2020



# Background

- Many communities in the U.S have residents participate to some degree in overseeing their local law enforcement agencies
- Less than 40 civilian oversight agencies in 1990, and as many as 200 today
- Many programs were established in response to concerns expressed in the community about police accountability
- No single model of citizen oversight
- Each committee or board appears to be a unique product of the environment that it surrounds

# Development of Civilian Oversight in the United States



# National Institute of Justice Report, 2001

- Most oversight procedures have features that fall into one of the following categories:
  - Type 1: Citizens investigate allegations of police misconduct and recommend findings to the chief or sheriff.
  - Type 2: Police officers investigate allegations and develop findings; citizens review and recommend that the chief or sheriff approve or reject the findings.
  - Type 3: Complainants may appeal findings established by the police or sheriff's department to citizens, who review them and then recommend their own findings to the chief or sheriff.
  - Type 4: An auditor investigates the process by which the police or sheriff's department accepts and investigates complaints and reports on the thoroughness and fairness of the process to the department and the public.

# National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE)

- Investigation-focused
- Review-focused
- Auditor/Monitor-focused

# Investigation-focused

- Routinely conduct independent investigations of complaints against police officers
- May replace or duplicate the police internal affairs process
- Staffed by non-police, “civilian” investigators
- Headed by a community board or commission that may hold hearings, issue subpoenas or make findings on investigations conducted by professional non-police investigative staff

## Investigation-focused

*San Francisco, CA Department of Police Accountability*

Berkeley, CA Police Review Commission (PRC)

Flint, Michigan Office of the Ombudsman

Minneapolis, MN Civilian Review Authority (CRA) Board



# Review-focused

- Often focus on reviewing the quality of completed police internal affairs investigations
- May make recommendations to police executives regarding findings or request that further investigation be conducted
- Commonly headed by a review board composed of citizen volunteers
- May hold public hearings to collect community input and facilitate police-community communication



# Review-focused

- *Rochester, NY Civilian Review Board (CRB)*
- St. Paul, MN Police Civilian Internal Affairs Review Commission (PCIARC)
- Orange County, FL Citizen Review Board\*

# Auditor/Monitor-focused

- Often focuses on examining broad patterns in complaint investigations, including patterns in the quality of investigations, findings and discipline
- Some auditors/monitors may actively participate in or monitor open internal investigations
- Often seek to promote broad organizational change by conducting systematic reviews of police policies, practices or training and making recommendations for improvement

# Auditor/Monitor-focused

- *Portland, OR City Auditor's Independent Police Review Division*
- Tucson, AZ Independent Police Auditor and Citizen Police Advisory Review Board

# Summary

- Civilian oversight programs vary significantly from one city to the next and even within the general categories and in some communities there are aspects of all of the models (Hybrid)
- There are no validated “best practices” in creating citizen oversight committees
- Jurisdictions should focus on the “best fit” rather than the “best practice” when considering how to structure civilian oversight
- Limited empirical evidence demonstrating effectiveness

# Resources

- National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement [www.nacole.org](http://www.nacole.org)
- Police Assessment Resource Center [www.parc.info](http://www.parc.info)
- Center for Policing Equity [www.policingequity.org](http://www.policingequity.org)
- Campaign Zero [www.joincampaignzero.org/oversight](http://www.joincampaignzero.org/oversight)