



FEBRUARY 2013

The Crisis Continues Inside Police Internal Affairs

A Report by the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey

BY PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Alexander Shalom, *Policy Counsel, ACLU-NJ*



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Introduction

Having an impartial complaint process that allows citizens to air grievances about police misconduct, accompanied by complete and fair investigations into those complaints, will improve law enforcement throughout New Jersey. The State of New Jersey recognized this more than two decades ago when the Attorney General first issued a comprehensive list of internal affairs (IA) rules establishing the rights of New Jerseyans to file complaints and a process by which they could do so. Having an effective IA process improves law enforcement because complaints often contain information that can alert supervisors in police departments that something is amiss and needs prompt attention. Additionally, by improving police practices and policies, good IA systems save public resources by preventing expensive litigation that may result when complaints are not addressed in compliance with the Attorney General Guidelines.

The American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey (ACLU-NJ) has recognized the importance of ensuring that police departments act in accordance with best practices. Too often, we receive complaints from citizens who feel that they are unable to get their grievance about an officer's conduct addressed by the department that is best equipped to handle and respond to the complainant: the officer's home department. In June 2009, we published a report examining how many of New Jersey's municipal police departments were in compliance with the Attorney General's Guidelines. The results were disturbing. We learned that the majority of departments failed to follow the law and the guidelines regarding individuals' rights to file IA complaints. We then attempted to work with many of the departments. Over the past two years, we have taken numerous steps to provide assistance to those departments seeking to correct their errors and implement best practices in this area.

This report picks up where the June 2009 report left off, incorporating the lessons from 2009 to conduct an even more thorough analysis in 2012. The results remained disconcerting. Once again a majority of local departments provided inaccurate information in response to the most basic questions regarding individuals' rights to file IA complaints.

The ACLU-NJ remains ready to serve as a partner with police departments that seek help in implementing best practices. Both police and the public benefit when individuals feel their complaints are both welcomed and addressed. However, leadership on this issue must also come from the top. As noted, the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) maintains useful and instructive guidelines to ensure access to the IA process. Having

shared a draft of this report with the OAG, the ACLU-NJ is extremely pleased to report that the OAG will soon roll out two initiatives demonstrating its commitment to an accessible IA process and proper training of law enforcement regarding the rights of citizens to file IA complaints. First, the OAG will distribute to all NJ law enforcement agencies a laminated quick reference guide on how to handle IA complaints, designed to be placed by telephones in police departments. The informative guide, similar to ones the ACLU-NJ provided to many departments, demonstrates the desire of the OAG to ensure that the established rules are followed. Second, the OAG is developing an online training course for all police employees to access. Using NJ Learn, a training platform for all New Jersey first responders, police personnel will be able to test their knowledge of the rules that govern access to internal affairs.

Both initiatives illustrate the strong commitment the OAG has made to encouraging compliance with its quality guidelines and full access to the IA process. The onus now shifts to the municipal departments to take advantage of the resources the state has pledged to provide.

What the State Law Says

General principles

- “All complaints of officer misconduct shall be accepted from all persons who wish to file a complaint regardless of the hour or day of the week.”¹
- “Any language that would serve to dissuade or intimidate a citizen from coming forward should be avoided.”²
- “Complaints should be accepted by any law enforcement officer. At no time should a complainant be told to return later to file his report.”³

Phone

- “Under no circumstances shall it be necessary for a citizen to make a sworn statement to initiate the internal affairs process.”⁴

Anonymous

- “Every police agency shall accept and investigate anonymous complaints”⁵

Third-party

- “All complaints should be investigated, as long as the complaint contains sufficient factual information to warrant an investigation.”⁶

Juveniles

- “All complaints of officer misconduct shall be accepted from all persons who wish to file a complaint ... This includes ... juveniles.”⁷

Non-citizens

- “No state, county, or local law enforcement officer shall inquire about or investigate the immigration status of any victim, witness, potential witness or person requesting police assistance ... [unless] the person has been arrested for an indictable offense or for driving while intoxicated....”⁸

¹ Internal Affairs Policy & Procedures, 09/2011, p. 16.

² Id. at 17.

³ Id. at 16.

⁴ Id.

⁵ Id.

⁶ Id. at 17.

⁷ Id. at 16.

⁸ Attorney General Law Enforcement Directive No. 2007-3, p. 4.

History

In 1991, the state Attorney General recognized the importance of having strong IA practices by unveiling the Internal Affairs Policy and Procedures (IAPP) to guide departments. The IAPP, which outlines best practices for police IA operations, was updated in 1992 and 2000 and then codified as N.J.S.A. 40A:14-181. The statute requires county, local and specialized police departments throughout the state to adopt IA procedures consistent with the IAPP. The statute also requires that each police agency, regardless of its size, establish an IA function. It sets out a model policy for agencies to adopt, as well as lays down minimum standards on a range of issues including the acceptance of complaints against police officers.

In June 2009, the ACLU-NJ conducted a survey of police departments and determined that “the majority of police agencies violate the law by limiting the time, place and manner in which citizens can file complaints.”

Specifically we found:

“The average citizen encounters numerous obstacles to registering a complaint. Finding information about how to file a complaint is an immediate barrier. Then, contrary to the law, many police departments insist that complaints be submitted in person and that juveniles cannot file reports without a parent present. Most departments surveyed are not able to accommodate non-English speakers. Many said they would report complainants who were undocumented to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Police employees who fielded our calls too often took on a tone of hostility or defensiveness. These and other obstacles discourage community members from lodging complaints against police officers.”

In 2009, we arrived at these overall numbers:

- 68 percent of departments did not allow for complaints by telephone.
- 49 percent of departments indicated that they did not accept anonymous complaints.
- 79 percent of agencies indicated that juveniles could not file complaints without their parents.
- 12 percent of agencies indicated that immigration status would impede the filing of IA complaints and many other agencies failed to assure callers that immigration authorities would not be contacted if a complaint were filed.

Although the 2009 study offered an overview of IA in New Jersey, the 2012 report delves even further into the type of access the public has. The 2009 study did not distinguish between departments that provided bad answers consistently and departments that provided bad access, in which no one was available to answer the questions we posed. In some areas in 2009, such as complaints by telephone, for example, the ACLU-NJ interpreted a department's inaccessibility to mean that it did not accept IA complaints via telephone, even though no one in the department gave a response. In other areas in 2009, such as immigration, the numbers came only from departments that were reached.

In 2012, having learned of the massive inaccessibility of departments, the methodology was fine-tuned in order to capture a more precise picture of New Jersey's police departments.

After publishing the results of our 2009 survey, we met the representatives from the OAG to provide input on changes that should be made to the IAPP. At the same time, the OAG formed a working group to discuss modifications to the IAPP. The IAPP was again updated in 2011.

As before, the IAPP still requires that: "All complaints of officer misconduct shall be accepted from all persons who wish to file a complaint regardless of the hour or day of the week. This includes reports from anonymous sources, juveniles and persons under arrest or in custody."⁹

⁹ Internal Affairs Policy & Procedures, 09/2011, p. 16.

In the years since our 2009 report, we have taken a series of actions to educate municipal police departments about their obligations under the IAPP. We spoke directly to 132 police departments about how they had performed in the study. We distributed a quick IAPP reference guide, developed by one police chief for non-IA personnel, to several local departments, the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police, 19 county prosecutors, the County Prosecutor's Association, and the OAG. We also developed a five-minute [▶ roll call training video](#) for police officers, in which members of New Jersey law enforcement agencies discuss best practices when it comes to accepting IA complaints. We distributed the video to all of the above entities and showed it to more than 70 IA officers at a meeting of the New Jersey Internal Affairs Association.

In 2009, we urged county prosecutors and the Attorney General alike to take leadership roles in ensuring compliance with the IAPP standards for an accessible IA process. At the time no statewide efforts guaranteed that departments would abide by the established rules. Thus, after all of our efforts to provide departments with tools to improve, we conducted this survey beginning in 2012 to determine the extent to which police departments provide citizens with correct answers to questions about accessing and navigating IA.

Study

Methodology of the ACLU-NJ's 2012 IA Survey

Using volunteers, the ACLU-NJ called 497 local and specialized police departments throughout the state during June and July 2012. All survey calls were made from the ACLU-NJ office during normal business hours when most, if not all, IA representatives should be available. The volunteers who made the calls varied in age, sex and ethnic background. Each call was recorded and supplemented with thorough notes. Volunteer callers made clear that they were not seeking to file a complaint themselves, but were calling on behalf of a friend or relative who wanted basic information about how to file IA complaints. Because volunteers were seeking only information — and not filing a complaint themselves — they did not suggest that an actual incident had occurred or give any fictitious details about an alleged incident. Specifically, volunteers asked five¹⁰ questions:

1. Whether the complaint could be filed by telephone.
2. Whether the complaint could be filed anonymously.
3. Whether the complaint could be filed by a third-party.
4. Whether a juvenile could file a complaint without his or her parents.
5. Whether an undocumented immigrant could file a complaint without fear that immigration authorities would be contacted.

The law is quite clear: complaints shall be accepted anytime, anywhere, from anyone, in any form. And because IA complainants are reporting misconduct, not getting arrested themselves, New Jersey law enforcement authorities are not permitted to initiate contact with federal immigration authorities solely because a person filed a complaint with IA.

We coded each call as either “good,” “bad answer” or “bad access.” The departments that answered each of the five questions in a manner consistent with the IAPP were labeled “good.” If the departments answered any of the five questions incorrectly, we coded them as “bad answer.” If we were unable to reach a person who could answer any of our questions, we coded the department as having provided “bad access.”

¹⁰ Not every agency was asked all parts of the survey because some representatives were unable to answer initial questions.

Results

Access

The IAPP calls for departments to make IA accessible to the public. This means departments may not tell complainants to return at a later time to file a report, nor can they transfer potential complainants to IA voicemail boxes. If they have automated phone menus, they must offer the option of “IA personnel” as a selection or provide a way for the caller to reach a live officer.

Many of our volunteers reported that they would have given up had they been seeking information to file a complaint themselves.

Finding someone knowledgeable to answer questions turned out to be the most difficult aspect of the undertaking for our volunteers, who called close to 500 departments. More than one in four of the departments we surveyed made it impossible for our callers to reach someone capable of providing answers to our questions. Many law enforcement agencies use automated answering systems that make it very difficult to reach a “live” person. Many of our volunteers reported that they would have given up had they been seeking information to file a complaint themselves. One police department in Passaic County placed a volunteer on hold for more than 16 minutes. **☎️ Additionally, 42 departments did not accept telephone calls from blocked numbers.** While that certainly hinders access for those seeking to file complaints anonymously, for the purposes of the survey we called those departments back without blocking our phone number.

As illustrated in Chart I and Table I, the overall results were troubling even among the departments where we were able to speak to someone. Less than one quarter of departments provided the correct answer to all of the basic questions asked of them. More than half of the departments we made contact with provided at least one incorrect answer.¹¹ Unfortunately, 51 police departments, about a tenth of all departments surveyed, did not answer a single question correctly.

¹¹ These numbers represent the ratio of departments who answered correctly (or incorrectly) compared to total number of departments called. More than two-thirds of the departments where we received an answer provided us with at least one incorrect answer.



Overall, our telephone testing found that the average citizen encounters numerous obstacles to registering a complaint. Many of the police department employees who fielded our calls often projected hostility, defensiveness or an eagerness to discourage a complainant. One Monmouth County officer advised the caller that [“his family should get an attorney before he wants to file a formal complaint against a police officer”](#) after failing to answer any of the questions correctly. [One officer with a Hudson County police department stopped speaking and refused to answer basic questions about the complaint process because our volunteer would not give his name.](#) These kinds of obstacles undoubtedly discourage community members from lodging complaints against police officers.

Table I: Overall Results

COUNTY	GOOD	BAD ACCESS	BAD ANSWER	% GOOD
Atlantic	4	4	11	21.1%
Bergen	21	5	43	30.4%
Burlington	10	8	15	30.3%
Camden	1	14	19	2.9%
Cape May	4	2	6	33.3%
Cumberland	3	0	0	100%
Essex	8	6	13	29.6%
Gloucester	4	9	11	16.7%
Hudson	4	5	5	28.6%
Hunterdon	4	5	7	25%
Mercer	1	3	9	7.7%
Middlesex	7	5	15	25.9%
Monmouth	7	13	28	14.6%
Morris	20	8	10	52.6%
Ocean	6	14	11	19.4%
Passaic	2	2	12	12.5%
Salem	4	0	3	57.1%
Somerset	4	10	6	20%
Sussex	0	5	7	0%
Union	5	5	12	22.7%
Warren	1	3	7	9.1%
NJ Transit	1	0	0	100%
TOTALS:	121	126	250	24.8%

On a county-by-county level, the results are equally dismaying. Only three counties, Cumberland, Morris and Salem — as well as New Jersey Transit Police — had a majority of departments provide correct answers. On the other side of the ledger, there were eight counties where fewer than 20 percent of departments provided answers in accordance with the Attorney General’s clear guidance.

Phone Complaints


- 44% of New Jersey police departments allowed complaints to be filed by telephone.
- 33% unlawfully restricted complaints by telephones.
- 23% were unable to respond because of bad access.

New Jersey law requires that departments accept complaints 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and provide alternative methods to filing an in-person complaint.¹² Having alternative options for aggrieved citizens is especially important, as citizens are often afraid to file complaints in-person with the very agencies they believe have victimized them.




¹² Internal Affairs Policy & Procedures, 09/2011, p. 16.

Even though the Attorney General Guidelines are clear that “under no circumstances shall it be necessary for a citizen to make a sworn statement to initiate the internal affairs process,” 164 of the local police departments we spoke to unlawfully denied complaints by telephone.¹³ Only 207 of the 371 New Jersey police departments that our volunteers spoke to indicated that they would allow complaints to be filed by telephone.

Additionally, when totaling county-by-county results, only Cumberland earned a perfect score on this question. Departments in other counties commonly gave rigid answers that were in direct conflict with Attorney General Guidelines. Unfortunately, one police department in Camden County responded to our volunteer by saying  **“absolutely not”** while laughing at the question of whether the department accepted complaints by phone.

In Monmouth County, one police department employee who was unable to answer any of our volunteer’s questions stated that it was a “busy, busy day” and “sometimes you can Google a question.”

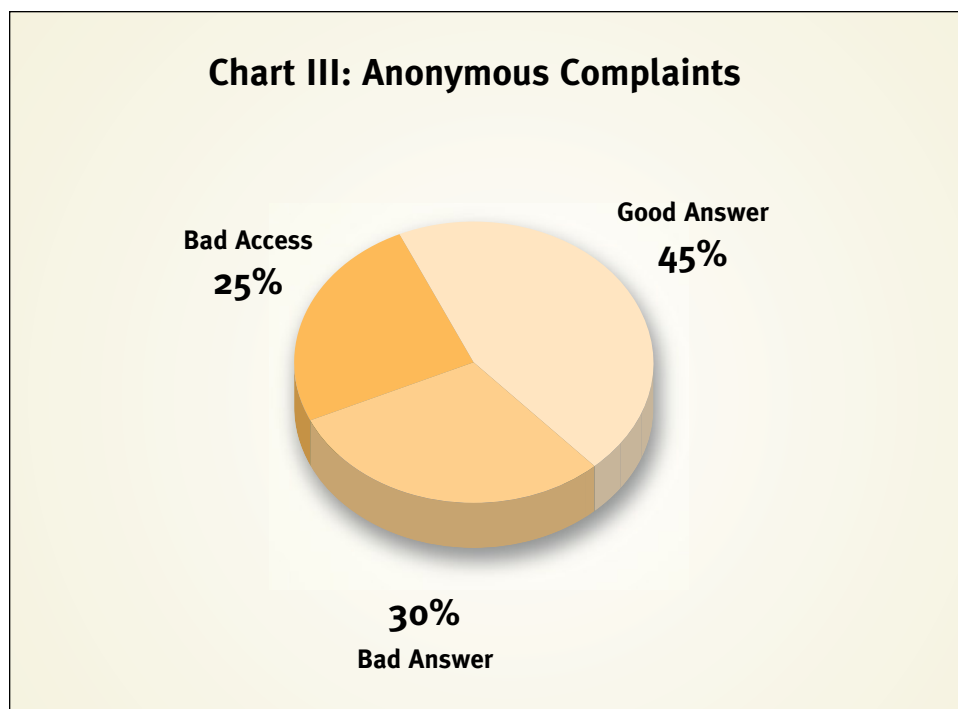
There were 126 police departments that could not provide any answers at all due to bad access issues — most commonly because the only individual in the department who had been trained to answer IA questions was unavailable to take our calls. Yet the Attorney General Guidelines clearly state that “complaints should be accepted by any law enforcement officer.” In Monmouth County, one police department employee who was unable to answer any of our volunteer’s questions stated that it was a  **“busy, busy day” and “sometimes you can Google a question.”** These responses stand in stark contrast to the spirit and letter of the OAG guidelines, which seek to encourage complaints.

¹³ Id.

Anonymous Complaints

- 45% of New Jersey police departments allowed anonymous complaints in accordance with state law.
- 30% unlawfully denied anonymous complaints.
- 25% were unable to respond because of bad access.

The Attorney General Guidelines emphasize the importance of accepting and investigating anonymous complaints. Although investigating anonymous complaints can be difficult, these investigations must be done. According to the IAPP, “the investigation of anonymous complaints can be troublesome. However, accurate information about officer wrongdoing may be provided by someone who, for any number of reasons,



does not want to be identified. Therefore, an anonymous report must be accepted and investigated as fully as possible.”¹⁴

Accepting anonymous and third-party complaints is critical to the IA process. It allows individuals, including fellow police officers, to file allegations of wrongdoing while limiting exposure and possible retaliation. Of the police departments we reached in the survey, 221 said they allowed anonymous complaints, in accordance with the guidelines. We received several responses where police officers told our volunteers that anonymous complaints could be made anytime. Besides Cumberland County, which earned a perfect score by providing correct answers for all questions, Morris County fared the best with more than 71 percent of police departments answering correctly.

In contrast, 146 police departments erroneously stated that they could not take anonymous complaints. In fact, one officer in Bergen County stated that an [anonymous complaint would never happen in any jurisdiction because many false complaints would be filed.](#) As with the question we posed about filing complaints by telephone, our volunteers faced many access issues and other pressure that discouraged complaints from being filed anonymously. Because of bad access, 126 police departments¹⁵ did not answer this question at all. Our volunteers repeatedly reported pressure from police personnel to give their names even though the law clearly states that anonymous complaints must be accepted. For example, [one officer in central New Jersey erroneously claimed that he had the volunteer’s phone number from his caller ID, even though our volunteer had blocked the phone number.](#) Additionally, an officer with an Essex County police department responded to our volunteer by asking, [“How could it be justified or how could it be substantiated?”](#) [When asked about anonymous complaints, the officer stated, “Everybody has a constitutional right to \[face\] their accuser; it’s in our Constitution.”](#)

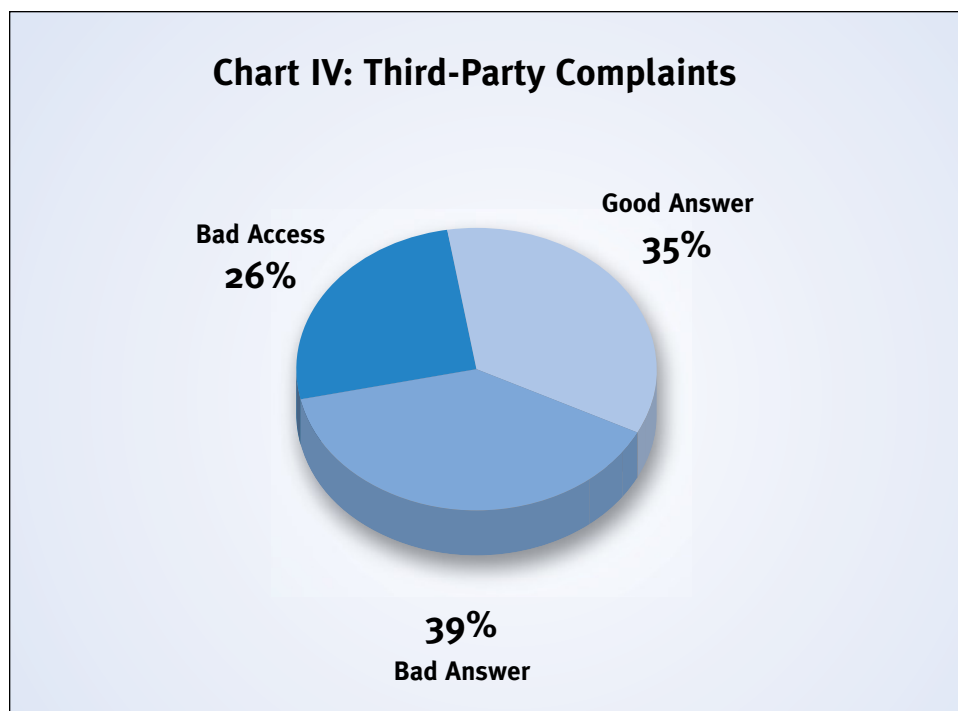
¹⁴ Internal Affairs Policy & Procedures, 09/2011, p. 17.

¹⁵ Four other departments were not asked this question at all.

Third-Party Complaints

- 35% of New Jersey police departments said they would allow third-party complaints, in accordance with state law.
- 39% unlawfully said that they would deny third-party complaints.
- 26% were unable to respond because of bad access.

New Jersey law clearly states that as long as sufficient factual information is provided, a complaint must be investigated no matter who files it.¹⁶ Despite the clarity of the law, only 168 police departments out of the 482 police departments that our volunteers¹⁷ tried to ask this question allowed individuals to make complaints on behalf of others. County-by-county results were particularly disconcerting. Only 11.3 percent of Camden



¹⁶ Internal Affairs Policy & Procedures, 09/2011, p. 16.

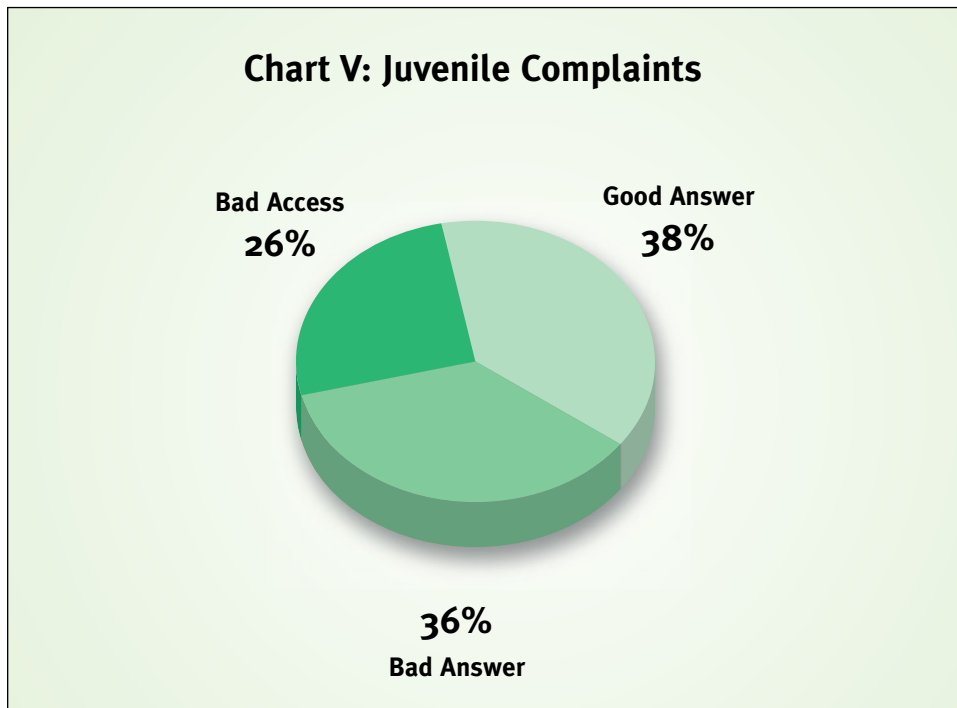
¹⁷ Fifteen departments were not asked this question.

County's 34 police departments answered correctly, while in Warren County only one of its 10 departments answered correctly. In Passaic County, only two departments out of 17 answered correctly. One police department in Bergen County that said it would take information from a third-party still asked, [«What about the credibility” of the complaint?](#) An officer in Warren County who identified himself as being an IA officer gave information that contradicted the letter and spirit of the law when he suggested that complaints from third parties would carry less weight than those filed by the victims of police misconduct themselves. [«An officer in Cape May County said that he guessed that a complaint could be filed by a third-party, but it “loses its life if it was not coming from a complainant directly.”](#) This is especially troubling because, like anonymous complaints, third-party complaints protect aggrieved parties from possible retaliation.

Juvenile Complaints

- 38% of New Jersey police departments said they would allow juveniles to make complaints, in accordance with state law.
- 36% unlawfully said they would require a parent or legal guardian to accompany minors making complaints.
- 26% were unable to respond because of bad access.

The ACLU-NJ’s volunteers asked whether juveniles (under the age 18) could file complaints without parental involvement. The IAPP states that a juvenile may file a complaint; it makes no mention of parents or any need for their involvement. However, in violation of the law, 36 percent of departments said juveniles need to have a parent

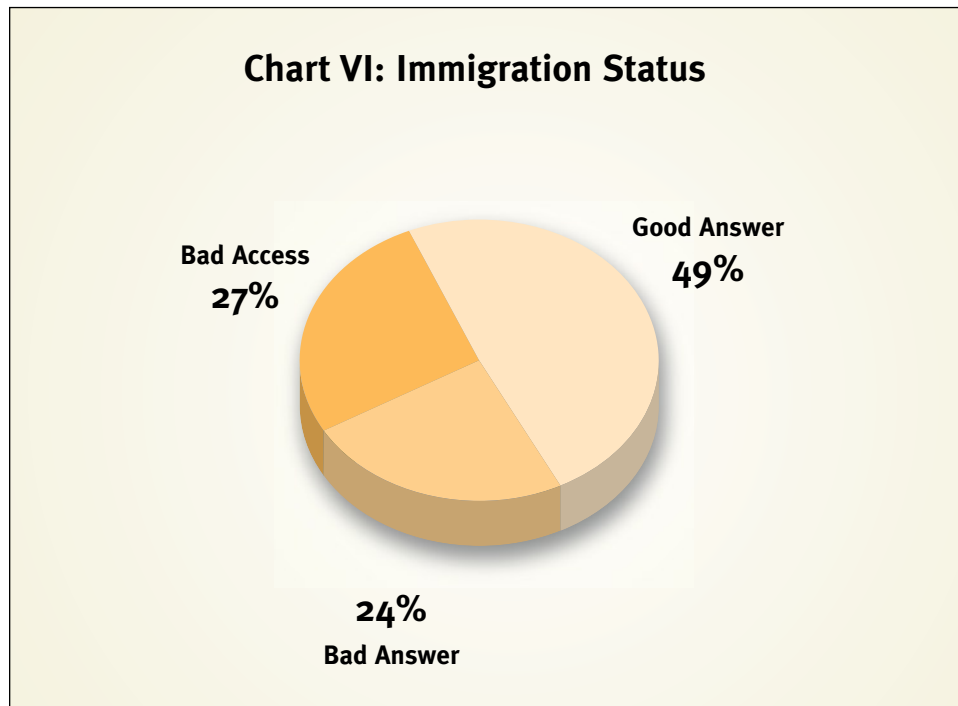







or adult with them to file a complaint. An officer in Burlington County gave a common response when he stated that **“a parent or guardian ... would have to be with”** someone under the age of 18 to make a complaint. Often, police departments showed a reluctance to accept a complaint from a minor. For example, a police department in Camden County that answered all four of our volunteer’s other questions correctly said incorrectly that a minor **“would at least need an adult with him”** to file a complaint. Strikingly, only one of Camden County’s 34 police departments answered that it would allow a juvenile to file a complaint without parents present as the Attorney General Guidelines dictate. Only 11 percent of police departments in Passaic County answered correctly. On the other hand, 100 percent of Cumberland County, 86 percent of Salem County, and 68 percent of Morris County police departments followed the Attorney General Guidelines by responding that a juvenile could file in the same manner as an adult. Unfortunately, only three counties recorded a lawful response rate above 50 percent.



Immigration Status

- 49% of New Jersey police departments said they treat complaints by non-citizens the same as they would complaints by citizens.
- 24% unlawfully said that the complaint process would change for non-citizens.
- 27% were unable to respond because they did not provide sufficient access.

Our volunteers asked law enforcement agencies questions to determine whether immigration status would negatively affect an immigrant’s ability to file an IA complaint and whether a complaint by an undocumented immigrant would result in a call to U.S.



Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). In 2007, the Attorney General’s Office issued a directive prohibiting local police from asking witnesses or crime victims any questions about immigration status. However, only 49 percent of the police departments we tried to survey assured our volunteers that ICE would not be contacted if a complainant were an undocumented immigrant. Our 2009 study recorded a strikingly similar response rate, with only 42 percent responding correctly. In this year’s survey, some departments used immigration as a pretext to dissuade the person from filing the complaint. For example, an officer with a police department in Passaic County said that ICE could be notified but it  “depends on what’s happening and what’s going on.” In Somerset County, an officer told our volunteer that he  “wouldn’t say [whether ICE] would or wouldn’t” be notified. An officer with a Sussex County police department said,  “If the investigation goes far enough, and he’s not an actual citizen, then, yeah, [ICE] would have to be notified.” An officer with a police department in Gloucester County responded by saying she  “can’t say that we will not” notify ICE. An officer with a police department in Middlesex County said that it would be  “very well possible [that immigration would be notified] because once it gets into the system, immigration has all access to the computers.” Many other responses indicated that the officers were unsure whether ICE would be notified, which is a major concern given most undocumented immigrants’ fear of deportation. Any uncertainty can have a chilling effect on a person’s willingness to make a complaint.

Other officers took on a tone of greater hostility. An officer with a Middlesex County police department said,  “If he is an illegal alien, I don’t know if he should be running around making complaints.” An officer with a northern New Jersey police department responded disparagingly to our volunteer’s inquiry by saying,  “So, he’s an illegal.” These responses are particularly troubling given New Jersey’s high undocumented immigrant population. New Jersey ranks fifth in the nation with roughly 550,000 undocumented immigrants.¹⁸

¹⁸ N.J. illegal immigration level holds steady. NJ.com, July 11, 2012
http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2011/02/nj_illegal_immigration_level_h.html.

Nine of the state’s counties recorded a correct response rate above 50 percent. Only one of Salem County’s seven police departments answered incorrectly. An officer from a Morris County police department embraced the spirit of New Jersey’s IA laws when he responded to our volunteer’s immigration inquiry by answering correctly and adding, **«We will make accommodations to speak with that individual and take his complaint seriously... If there is a language barrier, we will make accommodations to hear [his complaint] in his native language.»** On the other hand, 13 counties recorded a response rate below 50 percent in answering our volunteers’ immigration question correctly. In Gloucester County, for example, just 20 percent of 24 police departments answered correctly.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of this study are dismaying. There has been no significant improvement since the ACLU-NJ published its 2009 IA report, which documented a failure by many departments to adhere to IAPP guidelines. Once again, fewer than 25 percent of New Jersey's police departments consistently provided accurate information to complainants regarding their rights and the most basic IA procedures.

In summary, the 2012 study found that:

- In response to questions about whether someone could file an IA complaint by telephone, 66 percent of departments either gave incorrect answers regarding filing complaints by telephone or provided inadequate information for callers to get any answer.
- In response to questions about anonymous complaints, 55 percent of departments either gave bad answers or provided bad access.
- Regarding whether a juvenile could file an IA complaint without parental involvement, 62 percent gave bad answers or provided bad access.
- In response to questions about third-party complaints, 65 percent of departments either gave bad answers or bad access.
- Regarding immigration, 24 percent of departments indicated that the immigration status of a complainant would impact the IA process.

Following our 2009 study, some departments made an effort to reach out to us to discuss the results. Many of the police departments that we spoke to were interested in our study and eager to provide their staff with training to correct erroneous responses. The departments that we spoke to following the 2009 study did better as a group than those that did not reach out for help. Of particular note were Cape May and Paramus, which gave some incorrect answers in 2009. Both police chiefs were in contact with our office and indicated that they would seek to ensure greater compliance with IAPP going forward. We are pleased to report that both departments got all of the questions correct in 2012.

In 2011, the ACLU-NJ created a roll call training video educating police departments about the best ways to respond to IA complaints. We also provided departments with a quick reference guide intended for police personnel to keep by their phones to assist them in responding properly to IA inquiries.

The problems identified by the ACLU-NJ in its 2009 report and, again, in this present report, do not lie in the state's IA policies themselves. Rather, the problems lie with the police personnel who interact with the public most often, who are responsible for providing information about IA complaints but are unaware of the correct IA polices. The main avenue for correcting the problem lies in training and enforcement.

The OAG has long — and appropriately — been praised for creating policies that support the right of New Jersey residents to file IA complaints. Yet, until now, the Attorney General, as the chief law enforcement authority in the state, had not done enough to ensure that municipal police departments know — and follow — the rules set forth in the IAPP. However, after reviewing a draft of this report and meeting with ACLU-NJ staff, the OAG has taken action, creating an even more comprehensive quick reference guide of its own and creating an online training course in IA for all law enforcement personnel in the state. These measures are critical in helping departments provide better access to IA. We commend the OAG and are very pleased with these initiatives. But more can still be done. To that end, the Attorney General should:

- Mandate procedures that provide the public with information about filing IA complaints and access to IA officers.
- Demand that automated phone directories provide clear indications about how to file IA complaints.
- Prohibit telephone answering systems that do not allow calls to come through unless they show up on caller identification.
- Recommend placement of information on department websites for the public and police personnel regarding how to file complaints.
- Create language-accessibility and outreach standards for police departments in jurisdictions with significant populations of immigrants.
- Randomly test for compliance to ensure that departments that fail to provide proper responses are identified and re-trained.

The ACLU-NJ welcomes additional input on ways to improve IA and it remains willing to work with any departments that seek help in implementing best practices. When police IA operations function in accordance to the law, we are all beneficiaries, from the police to the public they are sworn to protect and to serve.

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