

# **THE GAPA ORDINANCE**

## **FACT SHEET**

### **FEBRUARY 2021**

# The New GAPA Ordinance

(Updated February 2021)

## What is the Grassroots Alliance for Police Accountability (GAPA)?

- A coalition of community organizations working in neighborhoods throughout Chicago, committed to making our neighborhoods safer, improving police practices and police accountability, and transforming community-police relations.
- Founded in the summer of 2016 in response to the Police Accountability Task Force's recommendation to create a "community oversight board" with "power to oversee CPD, the new CPIA [now COPA] and all police oversight mechanisms." The Task Force advised that the board's "precise powers and makeup should not be set by the Task Force, but should be developed with broad public input."
- GAPA works to ensure deep community participation in reform efforts, especially in marginalized communities most affected by crime, violence, and police misconduct.
- GAPA met more than 200 times with community leaders throughout Chicago to discuss the structure and powers of the new oversight board.
- GAPA consulted extensively with practitioners and experts across the country, including other police commissions and leading scholars on policing and public safety.

## What will the GAPA ordinance do?

The GAPA ordinance will fundamentally transform policing and public safety in Chicago by creating a **Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability** and **District Councils**.

## The Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability

### What are the Community Commission's powers?

- Play a key role in selecting important leaders by vetting all candidates. No one becomes a public safety leader without the approval of the community.
  - When there is an opening for Police Superintendent, COPA Chief Administrator, and members of the Police Board, the Commission will develop a short list of candidates for these positions. The Mayor will continue to have the power to hire, but must choose from the Commission's list. If the Mayor rejects everyone on the list, the Commission must generate a new list.
  - The Mayor will continue to have exclusive power to remove the Superintendent, COPA Chief, and Police Board members. But if the Commission believes that one of those officials has demonstrated that they are not fit to do the job, the Commission can hold hearings and take a vote of no confidence by supermajority, which would trigger a vote from the City Council and a public response from the Mayor.

- Establish goals and evaluate progress, ensuring that public safety leaders are truly accountable to the community.
  - At the beginning of each year, the Commission will set goals for the Police Department, COPA, and the Police Board.
  - At the end of each year, the Commission will evaluate the progress that was made toward meeting the established goals.
- Make CPD budget recommendations by reviewing the CPD budget and issuing a public report prior to when the CPD budget is voted on by City Council.
- Set policy that reflects best practices and community values and needs.
  - Most policy will be drafted by CPD, COPA, and the Police Board. The Commission can also draft policy for CPD, COPA, and the Police Board, and work to build support for it.
  - All policies must be reviewed and approved by the Commission.
  - Where there is disagreement about policy, there will be a process to build consensus and seek to resolve all differences.
  - Ultimately, the Commission may vote on any policy that is before it.
  - The City Council, by a supermajority vote, may veto a policy passed by the Commission.
  - Policies covered by the Consent Decree are not part of this process and will be handled as the Consent Decree requires.
- Promote community engagement and transparency.
  - The Commission will hold regular meetings and forums in different parts of the City, and work closely with community residents and community groups to hear local concerns and develop solutions.
  - The Commission can require the Police Superintendent and other key officials to provide data and reports, and to appear in public forums to address questions and concerns.
  - The Commission may publish public reports on matters of community concern.
- Ensure that police misconduct investigations occur.
  - The Commission will have the power to call for a COPA investigation.
  - The Commission will have a Director of Policy and Practice Analysis and Investigations who works with COPA to ensure that the Commission can make informed policy decisions while centering community.

## District Councils

### What is the role of a District Council?

- Build connections between the police and the community at the district level where the community is a true partner in generating and implementing public safety measures.
- Hold public meetings at least once each month, open to anyone who wishes to participate, where residents can work with the police district leadership on local initiatives, and raise and work to address concerns about policing in the district, including but not limited to interactions with youth and people of all immigration statuses.
- Work with the District Commander and community as new community policing initiatives are created and implemented.
- Build alliances with community and expand restorative justice practices in the district.

- Ensure a channel of communication for regular community input to the Commission, including by meeting citywide with all District Council members to propose priorities for the Commission as well as to identify policing trends and concerns.

### **How will the District Council and Commission members be selected?**

- In regular municipal elections, three District Council members will be elected in each of the city's 22 police districts. District Council members must have lived in the district for at least a year.
- Each District Council will select one of its elected members to serve on a Nominating Committee to select candidates for the Community Public Safety Commission.
- The Nominating Committee will choose two candidates for each opening on the seven-member Commission, using merit-based criteria specified in the ordinance.
- The Mayor will choose from the list provided by the Nominating Committee. The City Council will vote whether to confirm. This process ensures that every member of the Community Commission will have the support of the District Council Nominating Committee, the Mayor, and the City Council. As a result, Commission membership will reflect community interests, concerns, and values, while remaining independent.
- Most Commissioners will be selected based on their expertise in areas like mental health, social work, work with immigrant and undocumented communities, and law. Two of the seven Commissioners will be between the ages of 18-24 and have experience of police misconduct or justice system involvement. Commissioners must also reflect the city's geographic diversity, with at least two members each from the South, West, and North Sides.
- Either the City Council (by a two-thirds vote) or the Mayor may remove a Commissioner.

### **How long will District Council members and Commissioners serve? Will they be paid?**

- District Council members and Commissioners will serve four-year terms.
- Commissioners may be removed for cause by the Mayor or City Council.
- Commissioners will be paid \$12,000 and the president of the Commission will be paid \$15,000 per year, identical to the compensation received by Chicago Police Board members.
- District Council members will receive annual stipends of \$6,000.

Learn more about GAPA  
at [chicagogapa.org](http://chicagogapa.org)