

BRIEFING

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Community Services Briefing to

Executive Committee
2022 December 14

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
EC2022-1268

Council Innovation Fund Report Back – Complete Complaints Foundation’s Calgary Police Complaints App

PURPOSE OF BRIEFING

This report presents the outcome of PFC2021-0793 for the *Calgary Police Complaints App* (formerly called the *Clear Justice Guided Police Complaints App*) funded through a 2021 Council Innovation Fund grant.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

On 2021 June 8, the Digital Law & Innovation Society (now known as the Complete Complaints Foundation) received \$45,000 from the Council Innovation Fund to further develop the design of a computer application (“app”) with the intended outcome of improving the police complaint process.

The developers of the app were inspired by The City of Calgary’s commitment to anti-racism. After hearing directly from citizens about the numerous unreported complaints about police officer conduct, especially by those from marginalized groups, the university students/app developers wanted to address this gap in accessing justice. The app developers identified a need to make the current system easier, especially for Racialized groups who have historically been excluded from the process.

Funding from the Council Innovation Fund supported various stages of the app’s design which seeks to simplify the police complaint process. In response to feedback from user-testing, the app uses a straight-forward approach to gather relevant information from the complainant and provide clear direction about the steps of the complaint process. Here is how it works:

- The app uses plain language questions (available in different translations) to determine whether there are legal grounds for the user to submit an official concern or complaint about officer conduct.
- If there are legal grounds, the app generates a formal, statute-cited letter that the user can then submit to the appropriate governing body.

The final report submitted by the app developers is in the Attachment and includes confirmation of completed security checks, design, and user interface/experience best practices as well as an evaluation of legal research and translation, and reporting on budget.

Also included in the report was feedback from the first round of user testing which verified the useability of the app itself. Feedback included the fact that users felt more optimistic, heard, educated, and trusted by using the app instead of the current complaints system.

NEXT STEPS

The City of Calgary does not control the process by which third-party innovative ideas such as this app can influence and support the current police complaints system. The City of Calgary also has a limited role in the police complaint process itself. As such, Administration consulted

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with the Calgary Police Service and the Calgary Police Commission, to inform next steps in the process for the app developers.

According to the Calgary Police Service and the Calgary Police Commission, the Police Act mandates the required elements and process of complaints against members of the Calgary Police Service. Complaints that are initially received by the Public Complaints Director are referred to the Chief of Police as per Section 43 of the Police Act, which reads: “(1) All complaints with respect to a police service or a police officer, other than the chief of police, shall be referred to the chief. (2) All complaints with respect to the chief of police must be referred to the chair of the commission.”

The Calgary Police Service has a shared vision of improving the current police complaints process and making it more user-friendly. The Calgary Police Service is taking a variety of measures to this end and has interest in learning about the app and its development process, noting that procurement of new software is subject to a process.

The app developers will continue to monitor to see where they can advocate for further opportunities to connect with the Calgary Police Service on this initiative.

ATTACHMENT

1. Final Report by Complete Complaints Foundation