

CIVILIAN COMPLAINTS

I. INTRODUCTION

Each year, the RIPA Report highlights trends and data related to complaints by citizens about law enforcement. This data is significant, because it shows both trends within individual agencies by complaint type and differences in policies across agencies that may impact the complaint process. This section examines complaint data submitted by RIPA reporting agencies and provides a status update on the RIPA Board's past recommendation that law enforcement agencies remove deterrent language from civilian complaint forms.

II. 2024 CIVILIAN COMPLAINT DATA

In 2024, 526 agencies subject to RIPA's stop data reporting requirements (hereafter RIPA agencies) submitted civilian complaint data. These agencies include municipal and district police departments, county sheriff's departments, the California Highway Patrol, district attorney offices, K-12 school district police departments, University of California law enforcement, California State Universities law enforcement, and California Community Colleges law enforcement.¹ The data reported by these 526 agencies is disaggregated below to identify the total number of complaints reported in 2024, the number and type of profiling allegations reported, and the outcome of the complaints, as well as a cross-year comparison showing the number of complaints reported by different agencies over time.

A. Overall Civilian Complaint Data Reported by RIPA Agencies

The 526 RIPA agencies reported receiving 13,004 total complaints in 2024. Roughly three-quarters of RIPA reporting agencies (407, or 77.38%) reported receiving one or more civilian complaints during 2024, while just under one-fourth of agencies reported that they did not receive any civilian complaints (119, or 22.62%).

Of the 13,004 total complaints against law enforcement reported in 2024, most complaints alleged non-criminal conduct (12,519, or 96.27%), followed by complaints alleging a misdemeanor offense (310, or 2.38%). Complaints alleging a felony offense were the least common (175, or 1.35%).

B. Civilian Complaints Alleging Racial or Identity Profiling Reported by RIPA Agencies

In 2024, a total of 173 RIPA agencies reported receiving civilian complaints alleging racial or identity profiling (32.89% of all reporting RIPA agencies, or 42.51% of agencies receiving one or more complaints). These 173 agencies reported 2,282 complaints alleging racial or identity profiling. In 2024, there were a total of 2,282 complaints containing allegations of racial or identity profiling, constituting 17.55 percent of the total complaints reported by RIPA agencies.

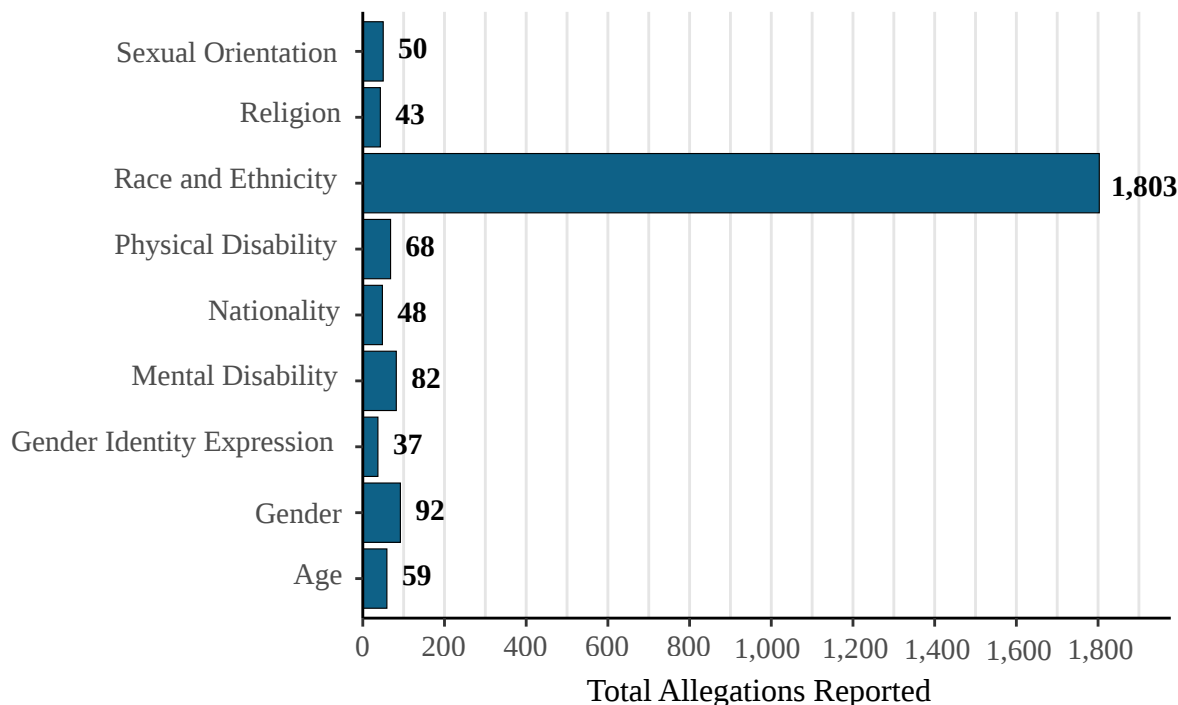
Law enforcement agencies are also required to submit data to the California Department of Justice (CA DOJ) categorizing profiling complaint allegations into nine categories: age, physical disability, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, mental disability, gender, religion, gender identity/expression, and nationality. The vast majority of profiling complaint allegations reported in 2024 involved profiling on the basis of race and ethnicity (1,803, or 79%).

¹ For more information on the law enforcement agencies that are required to report under RIPA, see Cal. Code Regs. tit. 11, § 999.225 <<https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/ripa/stop-data-reg-final-text-110717.pdf>> [as of XX, 2025].

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Figure 1. Total Allegations of Racial and Identity Profiling Reported in 2024



C. Dispositions of Civilian Complaints Reported by RIPA Agencies

RIPA agencies must also report the disposition (i.e., outcome) of complaints to the DOJ. Complaint dispositions are categorized as: “Sustained,” meaning that the investigation disclosed sufficient evidence to prove the truth of the allegation in the complaint by a preponderance of evidence; “Exonerated,” meaning the investigation clearly established that the employee’s actions that formed the basis of the complaint were not a violation of law or policy; “Not Sustained,” meaning the investigation failed to disclose sufficient evidence to clearly prove or disprove the complaint’s allegation; and “Unfounded,” meaning the investigation clearly established that the allegation is not true.²

In 2024, RIPA agencies reported that a total of 9,745 complaints reached a disposition during the calendar year.³ Among the 9,745 complaints that reached a disposition in 2024, 939 were sustained (9.64%), 1,655 were exonerated (16.98%), 1,162 were not sustained (11.92%), and 5,989 were deemed unfounded (61.46%).

A total of 1,552 racial or identity profiling complaints reached disposition in 2024. Of these, just 3 were sustained (0.19%). Of the remaining 1,549 complaints, 94 were exonerated (6.06%), 166 were not sustained (10.70%), and 1,289 were deemed unfounded (83.05%).

Figure 2 displays the distribution of disposition types within the 2024 data for (1) all complaints

² Pen. Code, § 13012, subd. (a)(5)(B).

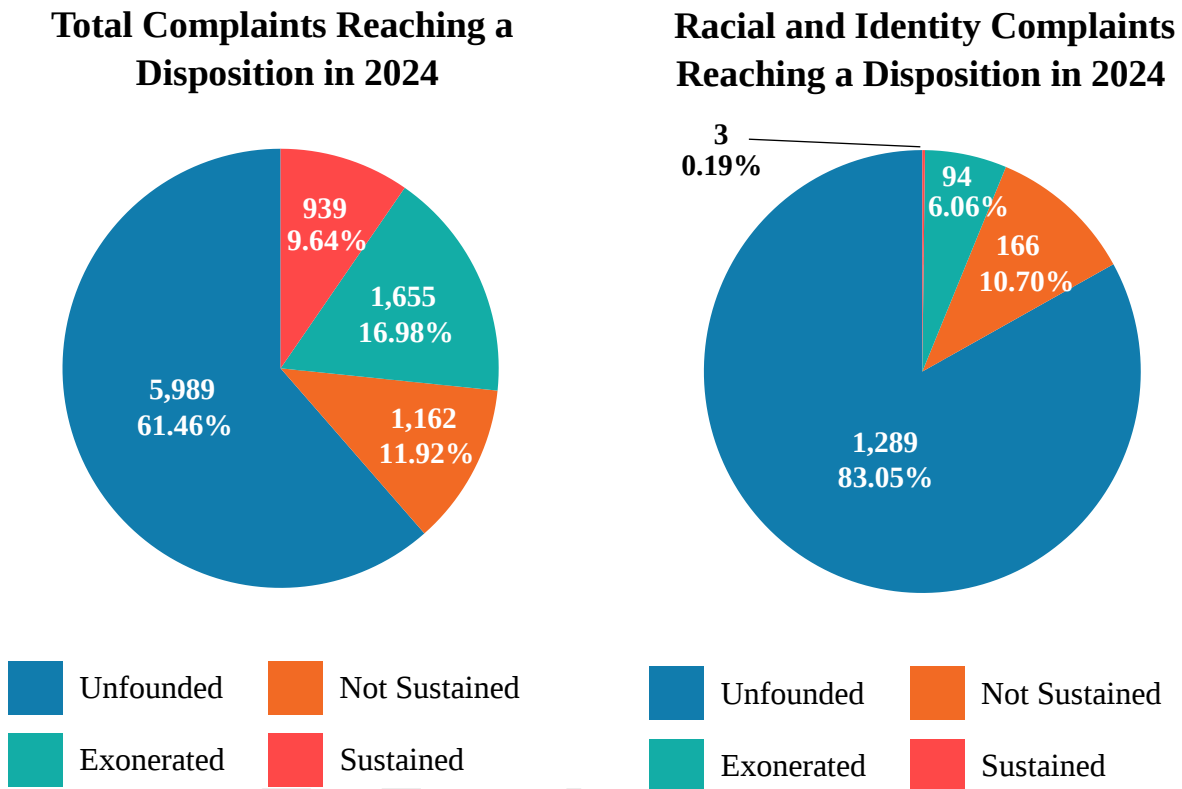
³ It is important to note that not every complaint reached disposition during the same year it was initially reported; therefore, it is possible that at least some complaints that appeared in the 2024 disposition categories were first reported in 2023 or earlier.

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that reached disposition and (2) complaints of racial and identity profiling that reached disposition.⁴

Figure 2. Disposition Distribution of 2024 Complaints



The Board is concerned that only three out of the 1,552 racial and identity profiling complaints that reached a disposition in 2024 were sustained. The low number of sustained racial and identity profiling complaints raises questions about RIPA agencies' methods of investigating and adjudicating such complaints. In the coming years, the Board plans take a closer look at RIPA agencies' internal processes for collecting, investigating, and deciding the outcome of these complaints to determine what factors may be contributing to this disparity.

D. Cross-Year Comparison

A cross-year comparison of civilian complaints data can aid law enforcement agencies in monitoring trends from year to year and ascertain the extent to which changes in agency policy or practice can positively or negatively impact the handling of complaints. For example, radical differences in complaints from year to year could result from changes in civilian complaint policies and procedures. However, it is important to note that, because complaint procedures are handled differently in each agency and there is not a uniform definition of what constitutes a civilian complaint, trends in complaint numbers may not necessarily reflect improvements to an agency's complaint processes. For example, a high number of complaints may demonstrate a

⁴ For an agency-level breakdown of how many profiling complaints reached each disposition type in 2024, see [Appendix Table X](#).

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robust complaint review process at one agency, while, for another, it may be more indicative of failures to make complaints reasonably accessible to members of the public. For these reasons, trends in complaint numbers must be viewed in relation to individual agencies' policies.

RIPA Complaint Data by Waves

To assist the large and diverse array of individual law enforcement agencies in California in implementing stop data requirements as smoothly as possible, RIPA structured the collection and reporting of stop and complaint data on a rolling basis, using the number of officers each agency employed in setting the timeline for reporting.⁵ These groupings were informally termed “waves” due to the rolling nature of the data collection timeline.⁶ This year’s Report continues to analyze the RIPA complaint data using the wave designations.⁷ This grouping allows for cross-year comparisons by agency size, and gives the Board and the public the ability to observe differences in policies and procedures that may have changed over time. The section below examines the data in these wave designations.

Figures 3 through 8 display the total number of complaints and the total number of complaints alleging racial and identity profiling submitted by all RIPA reporting agencies in Waves 1 through 3, across five years. Given that Wave 4 is over 400 agencies, aggregate cross-year comparisons are provided in the body of this section and the individual agency counts are provided in an appendix table.

Wave 1 Agency Total Complaints Reported (2020-2024)

In 2024, Wave 1 agencies reported 6,410 civilian complaints. This constituted a 5.5 percent increase in the total number of civilian complaints reported relative to 2023 (6,076), a 40.76 percent relative to 2022 (4,554), a 39.29 percent increase relative to 2021 (4,602), and 34.44 percent increase relative to 2020 (4,768).

Nevertheless, most Wave 1 agencies (5 out of 8) reported a decrease in the number of civilian complaints received in 2024, compared to 2023. The agency that experienced the largest decrease was San Bernadino County Sheriff’s Department (24.00%, from 100 in 2023 to 76 in 2024), whereas the Los Angeles Police Department experienced the largest relative increase (13.74%, from 2,577 in 2023 to 2,931 in 2024).

⁵ Gov. Code, § 12525.5, subd. (a)(2).

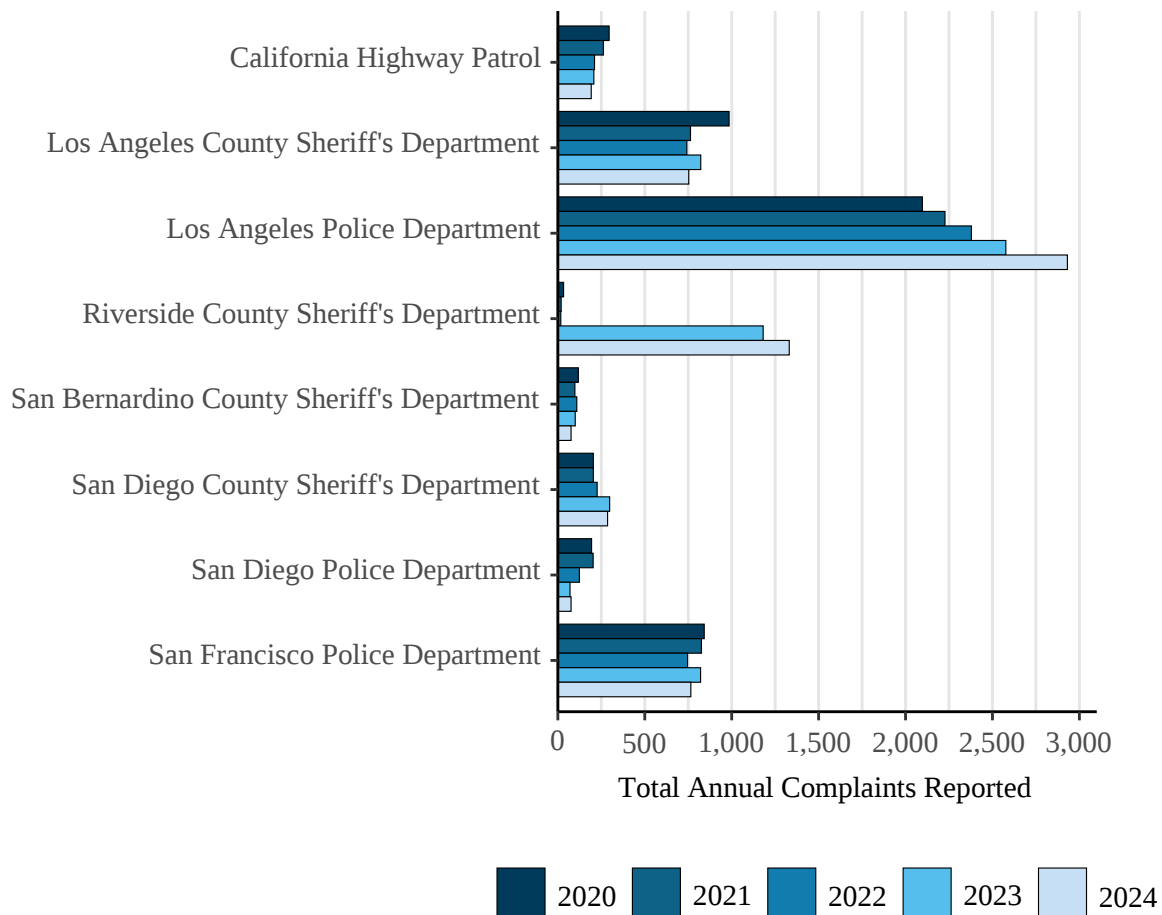
⁶ Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, Annual Report (2019) (“2019 Report”) p. 14 [as of Nov. 18, 2024]; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, Annual Report (2020) (“2020 Report”) p. 17; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, Annual Report (2025) (“2025 Report”) p. 162.

⁷ Agencies employing more than 1,000 peace officers (“Wave 1”) were first required to begin collecting data, followed by agencies employing 667 or more, but less than 1,000, peace officers (“Wave 2”), agencies employing 334 or more, but less than 667, peace officers (“Wave 3”), and agencies employing 1 or more, but less than 334, peace officers (“Wave 4”). (Cal. Gov. Code § 12525.5, subd. (a)(2); Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, 2019 Report, supra note 624, at p. 14; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, 2020 Report, supra note 624, at p. 18; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, Annual Report (2021) (“2021 Report”) pp. 8, 22. [as of Nov. 18, 2024]; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, Annual Report (2022) (“2022 Report”) p. 27 [as of Nov. 18, 2024]; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, Annual Report (2023) (“2023 Report”) pp. 32, 173 <<https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/ripa-board-report-2023.pdf>> [as of Nov. 18, 2024]; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, Annual Report (2025) (“2025 Report”) p. 162.) Some agencies assigned to Wave 4 began collecting data early. (See Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, 2022 Report, supra, at pp. 13, 17, 147; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, 2023 Report, supra, at p. 32; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, Annual Report (2025) (“2025 Report”) p. 162.)

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Figure 3. Wave 1 Total Complaints Reported (2020-2024)



Wave 1 Racial and Identity Profiling Complaints (2020-2024)

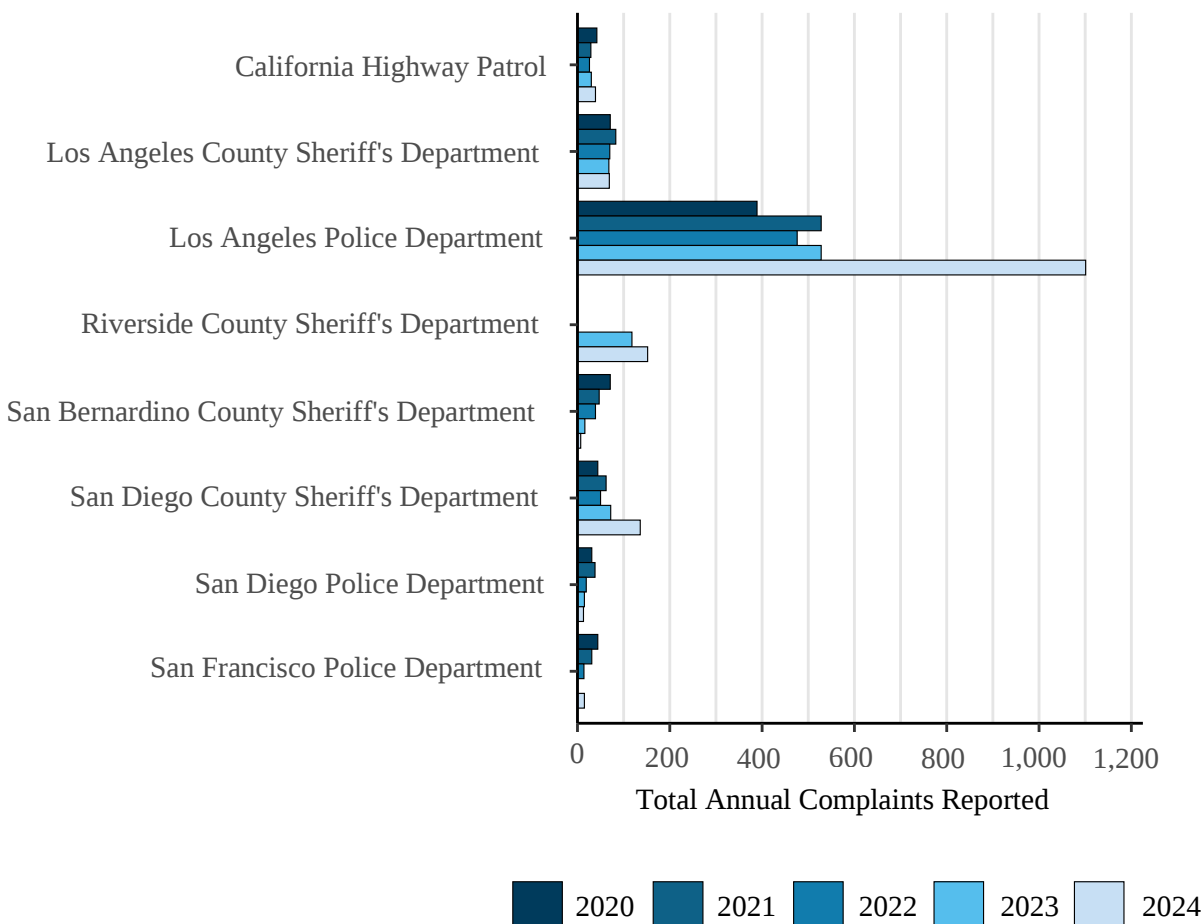
In 2024, Wave 1 agencies reported receiving 1,532 racial and identity profiling complaints, representing an 80.87 percent increase from 2023 (847), a 120.75 percent increase from 2022 (694), an 87.29 percent increase from 2021 (818), and a 121.39 percent increase from 2020 (692).

Three quarters of Wave 1 agencies (6 of 8) reported an increase in the number of racial and identity profiling complaints received in 2024, compared to 2023. The Los Angeles Police Department had the largest relative increase (108.52%, from 518 in 2023 to 1,101 in 2024), whereas the San Francisco Police Department went from not reporting any racial and identity profiling complaints in 2023 to 15 reported in 2024. The San Bernadino County Sheriff's Department had the largest relative decrease (56.25%, from 16 in 2023 to 7 complaints in 2024).

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Figure 4. Wave 1 Racial and Identity Profiling Complaints Reported (2020-2024)



Wave 2 Agency Total Complaints Reported (2020-2024)

Wave 2 agencies reported 1,267 complaints in 2024, representing a 61.58 percent decrease from 2023 (3,298), a 13.10 percent decrease from 2022 (1,458), a 26.12 percent decrease from 2021 (1,715), and a 48.37 percent decrease from 2020 (2,454). However, it is important to note that the percentage change from 2023 to 2024 is not directly comparable, as the totals for 2024 do not include data from the Oakland Police Department which was unable to report complaint data within the reporting timeframe for 2024 due to a cyberattack. Excluding the Oakland PD data to make 2023 and 2024 more comparable, Wave 2 agencies saw a 1.48 percent decrease from 1,286 complaints in 2023 to 1,267 in 2024.⁸

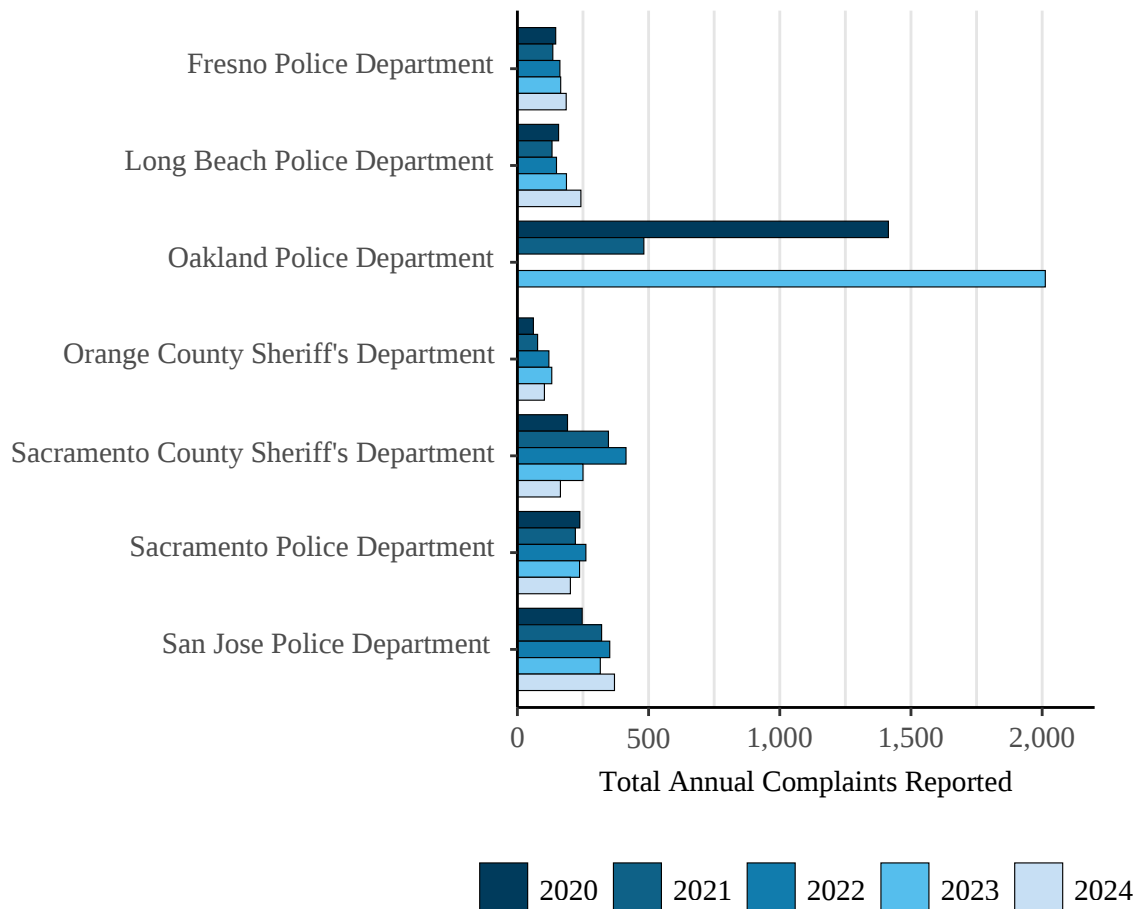
Half of Wave 2 agencies (3 of 6, excluding Oakland PD) experienced an increase in the total number of civilian complaints reported between 2023 and 2024. The agency that saw the largest relative increase was the Long Beach Police Department (29.41%, from 187 in 2023 to 242 in 2024). The Sacramento County Sheriff's Department experienced the largest relative decrease (34.40%, from 250 in 2023 to 164 in 2024).

⁸ In 2023, Oakland PD reported 2,012 total complaints, accounting for 61.02% of complaints for Wave 2 agencies.

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Figure 5. Wave 2 Total Complaints Reported (2020-2024)



Wave 2 Racial and Identity Profiling Complaints (2020-2024)

Wave 2 agencies reported a 2.24 percent increase in racial and identity profiling complaints from 2023 to 2024 (from 134 in 2023 to 137 in 2024). This also marks an increase in racial and identity profiling complaints relative to 2022 (up 24.55% from 110). However, this represents a 33.82 percent decrease (207 complaints) relative to 2021 and a 34.76 percent decrease (210 complaints) relative to 2020.

As previously mentioned, the Oakland PD experienced a cyberattack that prevented the submission of complaints data for the 2024 calendar year. As such, percent change from 2023 to 2024 is not directly comparable. Excluding the Oakland PD data, Wave 2 agencies saw a 16.10 percent increase, from 118 complaints in 2023 to 137 in 2024.⁹

Half of Wave 2 agencies (3 of 6) reported an increase in the number of racial and identity profiling complaints between 2023 to 2024. The San Jose Police Department experienced the largest relative increase (92.16%, from 51 in 2023 to 98 in 2024). The Sacramento County

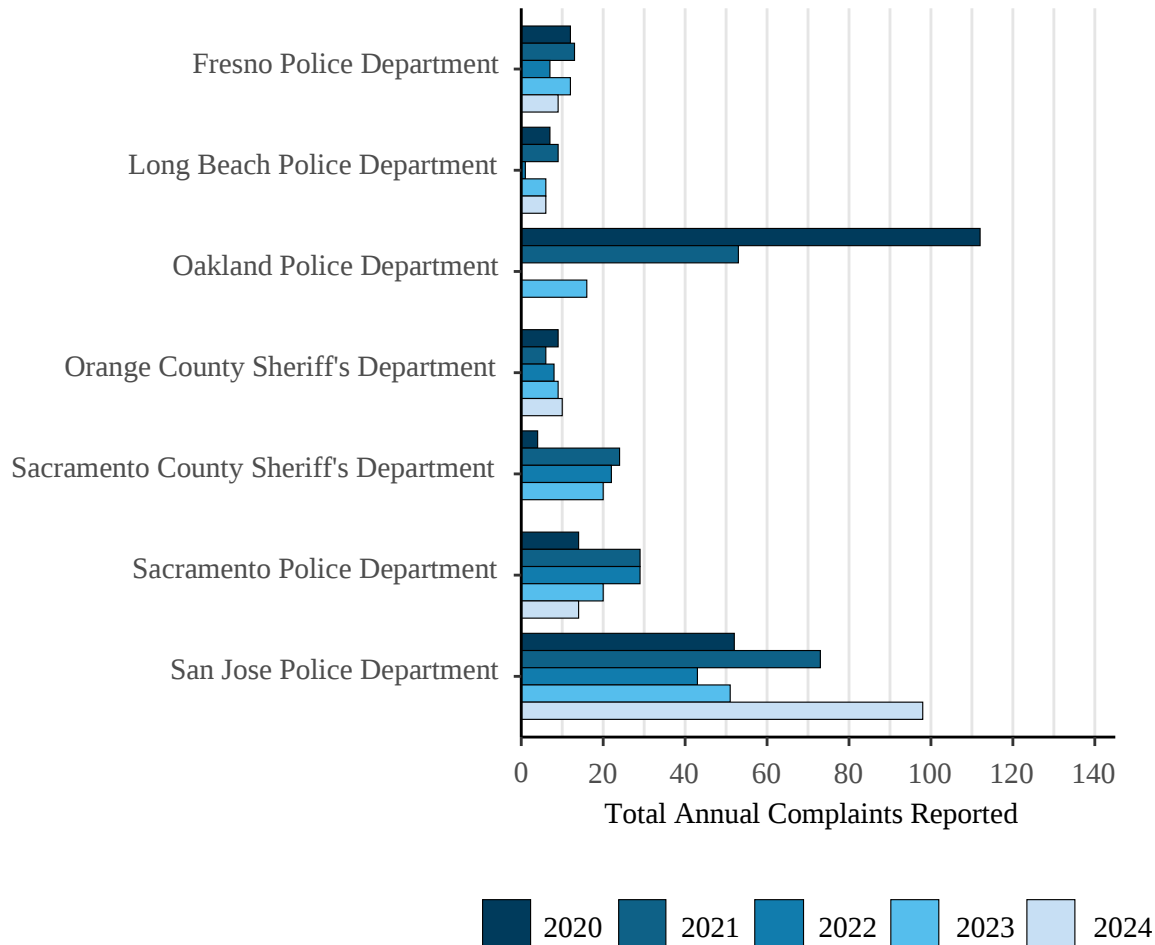
⁹ In 2023, Oakland Police Department reported 16 racial and identity profiling complaints, accounting for 13.56 percent of racial and identity profiling complaints for Wave 2 agencies (134 complaints total).

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Sheriff's Department experienced the largest relative decrease (100.00%, from 20 in 2023 to 0 in 2024).

Figure 6. Wave 2 Racial and Identity Profiling Complaints Reported (2020-2024)



Wave 3 Total Complaints Reported (2020-2024)

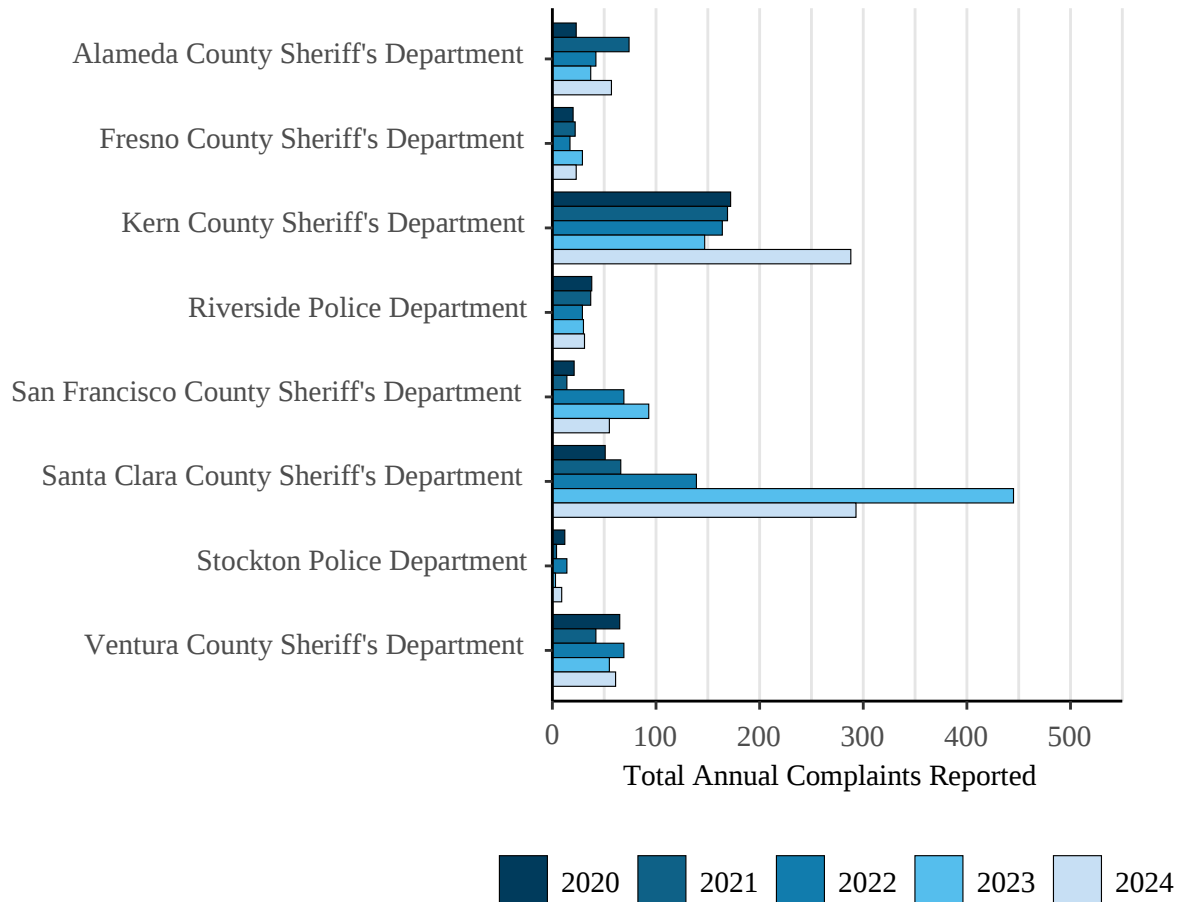
Wave 3 agencies reported 817 complaints in 2024. This was a 2.62 percent decrease from 2023 (839), a 50.46 percent increase relative to 2022 (543), a 90.89 percent increase relative to 2021 (428), and a 103.23 percent increase relative to 2020 (402).

The majority of Wave 3 agencies (5 of 8) saw an increase in total civilian complaints between 2023 and 2024. The Stockton Police Department saw the largest relative increase (200.00%), from 3 in 2023 to 9 in 2024). The agency that experienced the largest decrease was the San Francisco County Sheriff's Department (40.86%, from 93 in 2023 to 55 in 2024).

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Figure 7. Wave 3 Total Complaints Reported (2020-2024)



Wave 3 Racial and Identity Profiling Complaints (2020-2024)

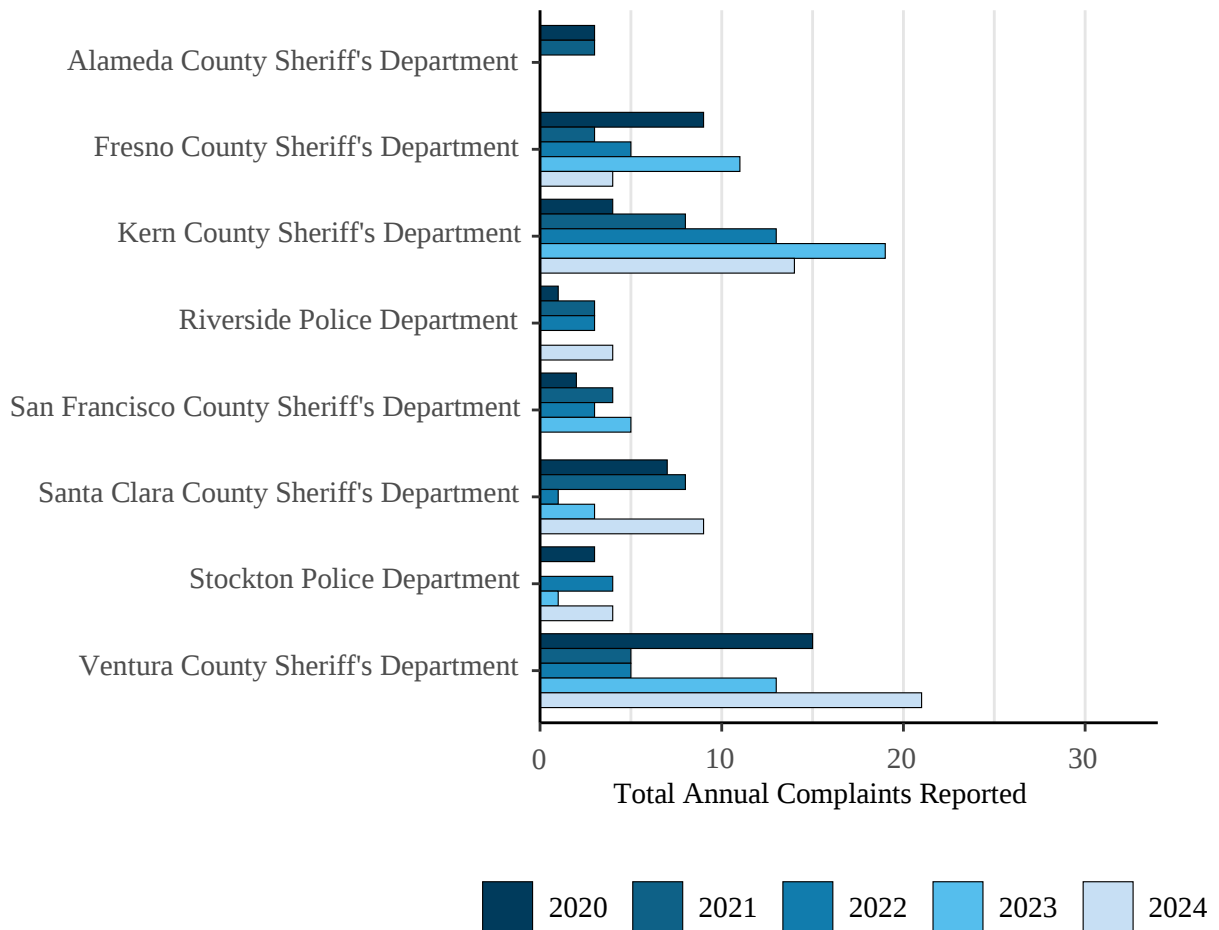
Wave 3 agencies reported 56 racial and identity profiling complaints in 2024, representing a 7.69 percent increase compared to 2023, a 65.71 percent increase relative to both 2022 and 2021 (both had 34 total racial and identity profiling complaints), and a 27.27 percent increase relative to 2020 (44).

Half of Wave 3 agencies (4 of 8) saw an increase in racial and identity profiling complaints between 2023 and 2024. The agency with the largest relative increase was Stockton Police Department (300.00%, from 1 in 2023 to 4 in 2024). One agency (Alameda County Sheriff's Department) had no change in profiling complaints with zero reported for both 2023 and 2024. The San Francisco County Sheriff's Department reported a 100.00 percent decrease in racial and identity profiling complaints (from 5 in 2023 to 0 in 2024).

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Figure 8. Wave 3 Racial and Identity Profiling Complaints Reported (2020-2024)



Wave 4 Total Complaints Reported (2020-2024)

Wave 4 agencies reported 4,510 complaints in 2024. This was a 6.57 percent increase from 2023 (4,232), a 25.14 percent increase from 2022 (3,604), a 34.75 percent increase from 2021 (3,347), and a 40.41 percent increase from 2020 (3,212).¹⁰

Wave 4 Racial and Identity Profiling Complaints (2020-2024)

Wave 4 agencies reported a 49.73 percent increase in racial and identity profiling complaints

¹⁰ The number of Wave 4 agencies exceeds 400. Accordingly, complaint counts for all Wave 4 agencies cannot be displayed within a single graphic in the body of this report. Instead, the cross-year total complaint and racial and identity complaint totals for individual agencies are contained within [Appendix Tables XX and XX](#).

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from 2023 to 2024 (from 372 in 2023 to 557 in 2024). This also constitutes a relative increase from the three preceding years: a 41.01 percent increase from 2022 (395), a 51.36 percent increase from 2021 (368), and a 67.27 percent increase from 2020 (333).¹¹

The Board will continue to monitor reporting agencies' complaint data and recommend that agencies adopt policies that allow for a more robust and effective complaint process, including adopting a universal definition of civilian complaint. For more information on best practices and policies regarding complaints, please see **XX** of the Report.

III. UPDATES ON PRIOR BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Remove Deterrent Language from Complaint Forms

The Board has previously expressed concerns that Penal Code section 148.6, requiring complainants to read and sign an advisory acknowledging that they may be charged with a crime for filing a false police report,¹² could have a chilling effect on members of the public seeking to file a complaint.¹³ Specifically, the Board is concerned that requiring a complainant to sign a written statement acknowledging that an individual may face criminal liability for filing a false complaint could discourage community members from submitting valid complaints.¹⁴ In light of these concerns, the Board previously recommended that the Legislature delete or amend the language of Penal Code section 148.6 to remove the advisory statement, as well as the requirement that a complaint be signed and in writing.¹⁵

As of **[DATE]**, deterrent language in California law enforcement agencies' complaint forms remains an active issue, which may be impacted by the California Supreme Court's forthcoming ruling on the constitutionality of Penal Code section 148.6 in the matter of *Los Angeles Police Protective League v. City of Los Angeles* (Case No. S275272).¹⁶ The Board will continue to monitor this case, and the use of deterrent language in civilian complaint forms, in future reports.

¹¹ Three Wave 4 agencies did not report civilian complaint data in 2024: Rio Vista Police Department, Trinity County District Attorney, and Yuba Community College Police Department. Rio Vista Police Department and Trinity County District Attorney also did not report complaint data in 2023. Yuba Community College Police Department did report complaint data in 2023 but reported a total of 0 complaints in 2023.

¹² Specifically, Penal Code section 148.6 provides that a law enforcement agency accepting an allegation of misconduct against a peace officer shall require complainants to read and sign an advisory that states, in part: "IT IS AGAINST THE LAW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT THAT YOU KNOW TO BE FALSE. IF YOU MAKE A COMPLAINT AGAINST AN OFFICER KNOWING THAT IT IS FALSE, YOU CAN BE PROSECUTED ON A MISDEMEANOR CHARGE." (Pen. Code, § 148.6, subd. (a)(2).)

¹³ See Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, 2025 Report, pp. 170-173; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, 2024 Report, pp. 195-196; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, 2023 Report, p. 179; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board 2022 Report, p. 229.

¹⁴ Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, 2020 Report, *supra* note 624, at p. 74; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, 2021 Report, *supra* note 625, at p. 134, fn. 294; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, 2022 Report, *supra*, note 625, at p. 232; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, 2023 Report, *supra*, note 625, at pp. 182-183.

¹⁵ See Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, 2023 Report, p. 182-183; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, 2022 Report, p. 232; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, 2021 Report, p. 134, fn. 294; Racial and Identity Profiling Advisory Board, 2020 Report, p. 74-75.

¹⁶ See *Los Angeles Police Protective League v. City of Los Angeles*, Cal. Case No. S275272.

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IV. VISIONS FOR FUTURE REPORTS

The Board is concerned with the extremely low number of sustained complaints of racial and identity profiling in 2024. As discussed above, only 3 of the 1,552 racial or identity profiling complaints that reached a disposition by RIPA reporting agencies in 2024 were sustained. This disparity in the number of sustained complaints when compared to the total number of complaints reaching a disposition in 2024 warrants further review by the Board. In the coming years, the Board hopes to take an in-depth look at RIPA agencies' processes for reviewing and adjudicating complaints alleging racial and identity profiling to determine what factors may be contributing to this low number of sustained racial and identity profiling complaints and whether there are areas for improvement in RIPA agencies' handling of such complaints.

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