

Civilian Complaints in Nebraska

Clear, accessible and welcoming complaint processes will build trust between the community and law enforcement and permit leadership to identify problems before they arise. With adoption of best practices, Nebraska law enforcement can ensure their good work is appreciated and understood by the public.

There are three primary guidelines for complaint processes to ensure the maintenance of public trust in law enforcement that have been developed by the Department of Justice:¹

- **Welcoming:** Law enforcement agencies should clearly announce their desire to hear from the public with any and all complaints.
- **Accessible:** Departments should accept complaints in all forms, especially online forms. A web presence is particularly important in this digital age.
- **Not intimidating:** Complaint policies should not discourage potential complainants through threats of prosecution or deportation.

The ACLU surveyed 31 agencies in 2014 and again in 2016. Particularly when it comes to making information available online, there was significant improvement from agencies. In 2014, only 8 agencies had any information online at all. We are very pleased to report that number has increased to 14.

Police have the vital and difficult job of protecting public safety. Performing this job effectively does not require sacrificing civil liberties. The policies and actions of the police are instrumental in deciding who gets stopped, searched, arrested, and funneled into the criminal justice system; indeed, the United States' overincarceration crisis begins at the front end of the system. Meanwhile, often under the guise of our failed drug war, concerns over treatment of people of color are rampant, and federal grant programs enable the increasing militarization of local police departments.

View the ACLU's full research: aclunebraska.org/civiliancomplaints

Take Action: aclunebraska.org/police_accountability

The unique position of power and authority that members of law enforcement hold means that there is an added need to uphold high ethical standards and accountability to the community that a department is sworn to serve and protect. One officer who engages in misconduct or abuse of power can sully the reputation of the entire profession. It is imperative for executives to consistently maintain a culture of integrity and community trust throughout their departments every day.

U.S. Department of Justice

Public trust with the community we serve is vital to the success of every law enforcement agency. An open and transparent complaint process is central to building and maintaining that trust, and it reinforces accountability within the agency. As an accredited agency, we proactively evaluate our policies and procedures and make changes that reflect national best practices.

Timothy Dunning, Douglas County Sheriff

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State of Complaint Practices in Nebraska Law Enforcement Agencies

The agencies in bold are ones whose overall procedures meet the DOJ gold standard.

	Has Information Online	Multiple Ways to Submit Complaint	Complaint Process Is Free of Threats	Complaint Information in Multiple Languages
Alliance Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Ashland Police	No	No	No	No
Beatrice Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Bellevue Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Columbus Police	No	No	No	No
Falls City Police	No	No	No	No
Fremont Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Grand Island Police	No	No	No	No
Hastings Police	No	No	No	No
Kearney Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Lexington Police	No	No	No	No
Lincoln Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Norfolk Police	No	No	No	No
North Platte Police	No	No	No	No
Omaha Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Plattsmouth Police	No	No	No	No
Scottsbluff Police	Yes	Yes	No	No
Seward Police	No	No	No	No
Wayne Police	No	No	No	No
Adams Co. Sheriff	No	No	No	No
Buffalo Co. Sheriff	No	No	No	No
Dodge Co. Sheriff	No	No	No	No
Douglas Co. Sheriff	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Gage Co. Sheriff	Yes	Yes	No	No
Hall Co. Sheriff	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Lancaster Co. Sheriff	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Madison Co. Sheriff	No	No	No	No
Sarpy Co. Sheriff	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Scotts Bluff Co. Sheriff	No	No	No	No
Seward Co. Sheriff	No	No	No	No
NE State Patrol	Yes	No	Yes	No

ⁱ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Service, *Standards*