



Phoenix Police Department
Public Affairs Bureau
620 West Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85003



MEDIA ADVISORY

Date: March 20, 2026

Update on 2020 Gang Charges Case

The Phoenix Police Department has completed its review of the criminal and internal investigations into the wrongful submission of charges against 18 individuals as gang members in October 2020.

After delays surrounding potential conflicts of interest, overlapping jurisdictional reviews, and the need to ensure impartiality throughout the process, Pinal County eventually took the lead on the criminal investigation. In August 2025, the Pinal County Attorney's Office ultimately informed the Phoenix Police Department (PPD) that no criminal charges would be filed against the involved officers. PPD's Professional Standards Bureau (PSB) needed results of that criminal investigation before completing its internal review. That internal investigation is now complete and has been provided to Chief Giordano for disposition.

After a thorough review, Chief Giordano determined that three of the six employees investigated by PSB violated department policy. Since the violations are policy related and not criminal in nature, disciplinary action can only be taken against individuals currently employed. Four individuals are no longer employed with the Department.

The actions surrounding these events fall short of our standards and expectations. The Department then and now strives to make continuous improvements. Since 2020, the City Council has directed and the Police Department has implemented improvements to strengthen accountability, improve transparency, and ensure constitutional rights are protected in every interaction.

Key Improvements Include:

Training, Policy & Oversight:

- Mandatory First Amendment Training for all department employees, launched December 2025.
- Ongoing training and structural changes, including a Field Investigations Unit. This unit is staffed by sergeants assigned to precincts specifically to handle investigative work. By taking on these responsibilities, the unit frees up patrol sergeants so they can remain available for complex incidents and provide direct supervision in the field where it matters most.

- Revised the policy violation matrix for all investigations and implemented clear, consistent protocols for forwarding material to the County Attorney’s office regarding any misconduct that could undermine an officer’s credibility (also known as ‘Brady’ material).
- Policy updates developed with community input, including a new [First Amendment Policy](#) launched in December 2025.
- Creation of the Public Safety Response Team to improve responses to First Amendment activity.
- Improved and expanded investigative practices, including written analyses for review boards, detailed explanations for complainants, and comprehensive policy violation reviews.
- Integrated recommendations from the Office of Accountability and Transparency into policies and processes based on their reviews of administrative investigations.

Transparency & Public Access

- Enhanced accountability measures within PSB to uphold the highest standards of professional conduct by providing comprehensive written analyses supporting the findings for the Critical Incident Review Board (CIRB) and Discipline Review Board (DRB), along with clear, detailed explanations provided to community members regarding the outcomes of their investigations.
- New [public portal](#) for complaint classifications and improved transparency.

While these reforms cannot erase the impact on those affected, they reflect our commitment to accountability, collaboration, and continuous improvement. We remain steadfast in our mission to serve with integrity, fairness, and respect for the rights of all individuals.

Public Affairs Bureau

