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Special Investigations Unit

# Annual Report

*2023-2024*



[www.siu.on.ca](http://www.siu.on.ca)

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## A Message from the SIU Director

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Special Investigations Unit for 2023-2024.

The SIU is Ontario's civilian oversight agency charged with investigating the conduct of police officers resulting in death, serious injury, a firearm discharge at a person or a sexual assault allegation. Its mandate is limited to a consideration of criminal liability. Thus, if the investigation gives rise to a reasonable belief that a criminal offence has been committed, the SIU will lay the appropriate criminal charge against the police officer and the matter will proceed through the court system for a final determination of guilt or innocence. Alternatively, where there are no reasonable grounds to believe a criminal offence was committed, the SIU cannot proceed with criminal charges. In this instance, a full report of the investigation is prepared and posted on the SIU's website.

In the pages of this report, the reader will see the efforts undertaken by the SIU over the year in the service of a better SIU for all Ontarians. These included making further improvements in information technologies to support investigations, ramping up training opportunities for all staff to sharpen their skill-sets, and continuous education to all staff in the areas of anti-bias, equity and inclusion. This work has, in particular, better equipped investigators to recognize the pernicious effects of systemic racism, especially anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism, that can sometimes inform the context of police-citizen interactions under investigation. This sensitivity can only improve the quality of SIU investigations, as well as help us identify where these forces are at work within oversight itself.

There are stress points at the SIU that warrant particular attention. In particular, a persistently high caseload continues to push our human resources to the limit. Burn-out and the mental health of staff are of particular concern. The number of days to conclude cases is also beginning to creep higher. While staff have continued to perform at very high levels to meet the demand, the SIU will have to carefully monitor and manage these pressures to keep performance up. A review has been undertaken to assist in identifying where help is needed most. The product of that review will inform SIU efforts to fortify its ranks moving forward.

Lastly, I would be remiss in not expressly thanking each and every member of the SIU for their incredible work over the year.

Sincerely,



Joseph Martino, Director

# Terminology

## Director

The SIU is led by a Director who must never have served as a police official. The Director oversees all the SIU's operations. They can be appointed to serve a maximum of two five-year terms by Order in Council.

## Subject Official

A subject official is an official whose conduct, in the Director's opinion, may have caused the death, serious injury, firearm discharge or alleged sexual assault under investigation.

Subject officials are invited, but cannot be compelled, to present themselves for an interview with the SIU, nor do they have to submit their notes to the SIU. Once they become the focus of an investigation and, therefore, under criminal jeopardy, the subject official is granted the same rights as any citizen under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to protections against self-incrimination.

## Witness Official

A witness official is an official who, in the opinion of the SIU Director, is involved in the incident under investigation but is not a subject official. Witness officials have a duty under the *Special Investigations Unit Act, 2019*, to submit to interviews with SIU investigators at the earliest opportunity. The SIU is also entitled to a copy of their notes.

## Affected Person

An affected person is the individual who died, suffered serious injury, was subject to a sexual assault or was fired at in a police-involved incident. Affected persons and their families are provided support and updates by the SIU.

## Director's Report

In cases where the Director finds no evidence to proceed with criminal charges against the police official(s) involved, a Director's Report is published on the SIU website. The Director's Report provides a summary of the investigation, the evidence gathered and the findings of fact by the Director that led to the decision.

## Memo

In cases found to fall outside the SIU's jurisdiction, such as where the affected person did not suffer a serious injury, the Director will terminate the investigation and issue a memo that outlines the reasons for the decision. Cases can be re-opened if new evidence comes to light.

## Serious Injury

A person sustains a serious injury if the injury in question is likely to interfere with the person's health or comfort and is not transient or trifling in nature. A serious injury includes:

- an injury that results in admission to a hospital
- a fracture to the skull, or to a limb, rib, or vertebra
- burns to a significant proportion of a person's body
- the loss of any portion of a person's body
- a loss of vision or hearing

## The Unit: What it Does

The SIU is a civilian law enforcement agency in Ontario that has jurisdiction over municipal, regional, and provincial police officers, as well as special constables employed by the Niagara Parks Commission and peace officers with the Legislative Protective Service.

The SIU – independent of any police service and operating at arm's length from the Ministry of the Attorney General – investigates incidents involving officials where they are implicated in the following cases:

- The death of a person
- The serious injury of a person
- The discharge of a firearm at a person
- The sexual assault of a person

The SIU conducts investigations to determine whether there are grounds to charge an official in relation to the incident under review. If the SIU Director determines that there are reasonable grounds to believe that an official has committed an offence under the *Criminal Code of Canada*, the SIU Director is compelled to charge the official.

Where the grounds do not exist to lay a charge, the Director will instead issue a public report – the Director's Report - summarizing the investigation and reasons for the decision.

All investigations are conducted by SIU civilian investigators, who are peace officers.

# SIU Vision, Mission and Values

Over the last year, the SIU refreshed its Vision, Mission and Strategic Priorities to better reflect how it intends to fulfill its mandate moving forward.



## Our Vision, Mission, and Priorities

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**VISION**  
*To nurture the trust and confidence of all Ontarians in the independent civilian oversight of police across the province.*

**MISSION**  
*To serve the public by holding Ontario's police accountable through independent and transparent criminal investigations into the most serious police-civilian interactions.*  
*To build a modern workplace that delivers high quality investigations and services for the public and affected persons.*

### PRIORITIES



**Excellence in Investigations** | *Ensure high quality investigations*

**Priority 1-A** | Develop a robust, in-house training program focused on building investigative skills and a culture of teamwork (Complete by year 2)

**Priority 1-B** | Provide investigative staff with the most up-to-date technology and equipment (with the associated training) to assist in completing high quality investigations (Complete by year 2)

**Priority 1-C** | Conduct a review to improve investigative processes to be more effective and efficient in achieving the legislated 120-day timeline (Complete by year 2)



**Greater Public Transparency** | *Ensure the SIU is as open with the public as possible*

**Priority 3-A** | Create a new communications plan to enhance information flow with the public and other stakeholders throughout the investigative process (Complete by year 3)

**Priority 3-B** | Establish new and diverse ways to engage the public through a revised outreach program (Complete by year 3)

**Priority 3-C** | Expand the Director's Resource Committee beyond the Greater Toronto Area to establish meaningful connections with communities that have regionally diverse experiences/perspectives (Complete by year 3)

**Priority 3-D** | Develop and publicly report on more performance measures to demonstrate commitment to accountability (Complete by year 3)



**Proactive Police Oversight** | *Maximize the SIU's ability to be strategic and responsive*

**Priority 2-A** | Create processes and tools to support the collection, analysis and reporting of race-based data (Complete by year 1)

**Priority 2-B** | Build a comprehensive data inventory to support identifying and reporting on trends in policing (Complete by year 3)

**Priority 2-C** | Create processes to continuously support the identification and reporting of best practices on independent civilian oversight within the organization and beyond (Complete by year 3)



**Modernizing the SIU** | *Foster a modern, skilled, diverse, and inclusive workplace*

**Priority 4-A** | Develop and implement a strategy for recruitment and retention of staff to minimize turnover and contribute to the SIU's stability (Complete by year 3)

**Priority 4-B** | Develop and implement a new human capital plan to meet future talent management needs (Complete by year 5)

**Priority 4-C** | Develop and implement a new diversity plan, in conjunction with the human capital plan, that enables the organization to reflect the diversity of Ontarians (Complete by year 5)

**Priority 4-D** | Provide staff with modern IT infrastructure, technology and tools to support their work (Complete by year 5)

### Our Values

Integrity Teamwork Communication Excellence Accountable Unbiased Dedicated

## SIU – Building Stronger Civilian Oversight

One of the important ways the SIU continues to evolve as a leader in civilian oversight of policing is through its engagement with the public, such as seeking out and fostering community relationships and connecting with other law enforcement and oversight agencies.

### SIU Meets with Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS)

On April 5, 2023, SIU met with CSIS officials to discuss the agencies' respective mandates. The development of this relationship will assist in future cases that may call on both agencies to cooperate with one another.

### SIU and Ombudsman Toronto Build Relationship

In 2023, Ombudsman Toronto expanded its mandate to include Toronto Police Service policies and procedures. The SIU welcomed the opportunity to build ties with Ombudsman Toronto. On April 12, 2023, SIU delivered a presentation to Ombudsman Toronto staff about the SIU.

### Canadian Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (CACOLE)

The SIU attended the annual conference put on by CACOLE in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on May 30 and 31, 2023. The agency participated in a panel discussion at the conference dealing with topics such as the public release of information by oversight agencies during and after investigations. The conference was attended by civilian oversight bodies across the country. Delegates from the United States and Jamaica were also in attendance.

### Police Association of Ontario (PAO) Annual General Meeting

Together with the Ontario Independent Police Review Director and Ontario's Inspector General of Policing, the SIU participated in a panel discussion of oversight issues at the PAO's annual general conference in Aurora on June 1, 2023. The meeting was attended by about 160 association representatives from around the province.

### SIU Meets with the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards

On June 8, 2023, the SIU met with the Executive Director of the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards. The two organizations agreed to meet regularly to discuss issues of mutual concern.

### SIU Attends Meeting of Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) in Washington, DC

At the invitation of PERF, the SIU attended a meeting in Washington, DC in September 2023, with PERF at the National Press Club. PERF brought senior police executives from across the United States together to discuss best practices in the investigation of 'officer-involved critical



incidents'. The SIU was asked to participate to provide the perspective of a civilian, independent body engaged in this work.

The agency took part in a lively discussion around such issues as stakeholder relations, outreach, transparency in investigations, officer access to body-worn camera footage ahead of interviews, delaying subject officer interviews following a 'sleep cycle', etc. The views expressed at the meeting will figure into a publication being prepared by PERF of best-practices in the investigation of officer-involved critical incidents.

### SIU Participates at Annual Meeting of Heads of Police Oversight Agencies

On October 24 and 25, 2023, the SIU attended the Annual Meeting of Heads of Police Oversight Agencies. The meeting, held in Ottawa and organized by the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP, brings together the leadership of Canada's complaints and 'SIU'-type bodies. Discussed around the table were issues around public engagement, especially with respect to Indigenous communities, the use and potential release of video footage, and the development of model policies to help guide best practices in police oversight.

### SIU Speaks at Gathering of the Ontario Association of Police Services Board (OAPSB)

On October 26, 2023, the SIU sat on a panel with the OIPRD and the Inspector General of Policing before a meeting of the OAPSB. Under the *Community Safety and Policing Act*, scheduled to come into force on April 1, 2024, Ontario police services boards will have additional responsibilities with respect to the oversight of policing in the province.

### Alberta Delegation's Visit to the SIU on March 7, 2024

The SIU hosted delegates from Alberta, which will be implementing a new public agency to handle all misconduct and criminal investigations against police in the province. The agency will in essence be the one front door for all matters of police oversight and investigations.

As an established police oversight agency with over 30 years of experience and lessons learned, the SIU management team and staff took time to share best business practices and challenge in the areas of investigations, training, outreach, recruitment, organizational structure, and IT.

### SIU Director's Resource Committee (DRC)

In April and September 2023, DRC meetings were held. The committee brings together community agencies and representatives to discuss issues of mutual interest in the field of police oversight. Consultation and engagement with communities are critical to the function of the SIU.

On April 18, 2023, the SIU honoured its longest-standing DRC member – Mr. Arthur Downes. It was not the first time Mr. Downes has been recognized for his life's achievements. In 2000, he

was honoured by the Ontario Black History Society. He has even had a street in Toronto named after him – Downes Street.

Mr. Downes has been a Justice of the Peace, a lecturer at Humber College, and Honorary Consul for the Republic of Guinea. In the early 1970s, he was part of a group that first developed liaison committees between Toronto police and the Black community. He has devoted much of his life to promoting equity and inclusion on behalf of Black residents in the City of Toronto.

The DRC has been privileged to have Mr. Downes on its DRC since its inception in 2002. He has never wavered in his commitment to the work of the committee.

A list of the current DRC members is available here: <https://www.siu.on.ca/en/drc.php>

## Community Connections and Outreach

An effective oversight agency depends on the continual evolution of its operations to ensure best practices in investigations and other program areas, as well as a sensitivity to the socio-political questions that frame issues of policing and policing oversight.

The SIU does this by connecting with, and learning from, community groups, organizations in other jurisdictions, and sister agencies – at home and abroad. In 2023-2024, the Unit's Outreach Program concentrated on engaging mass populations and communities via media and community events.

### SIU Attends the Annual Law Enforcement and Emergency Services Career Fair

On November 16, 2023, the SIU participated in the Annual Law Enforcement and Emergency Services Career Fair sponsored by ABLE in collaboration with the University of Guelph-Humber. Over 300 students attended the event.

The SIU's participation resulted in the agency partnering with the University of Guelph-Humber to serve as a host in its Justice Studies Field Placement Program.

### SIU Outreach at Open Streets Event in City of Hamilton

On June 18, 2023, the SIU took part in the event by operating an Outreach booth staffed by SIU personnel with a SIU forensic truck on display.

The event was very well attended by Hamiltonians of all backgrounds, who had an opportunity to learn more about the work of the SIU.

## SIU Attends Association of Black Law Enforcers Scholarship Awards Gala

The SIU was in attendance on November 4, 2023, at the annual Scholarship Awards Gala sponsored by the Association of Black Law Enforcers. ABLE is a non-profit organization formed in 1992 to address the needs and concerns of racialized groups in law enforcement, and the communities they live and serve in.

At the event, several students of high achievement were honoured and awarded scholarships to assist with their educational goals in the justice sector. The SIU was honoured to have attended the event and is proud of its support of ABLE.

## Diversity and Media

The SIU participated in diverse media platforms, reaching out to Ontarians in different languages. These opportunities provided outreach to a wider audience, through unique, more accessible forums of communications.

- On July 2, 2023, the SIU participated in a live interview on CHIN TV's Festival Italiano di Johnny Lombardi program.
- The SIU provided interviews in both Hindi and Punjabi languages for PTC Punjabi Television during the Moksha Canada Diwali Festival, held in November 2023.
- On November 6, 2023, the SIU participated in a live talk show on 88.9 RED FM for Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu speaking Ontarians. 88.9 RED FM is the largest South Asian Radio station in Canada.

## SIU on 211 Ontario – Accessible Information for the Public

In February 2023, the SIU was added to the 211 Ontario website - 211ontario.ca - which provides Ontarians with 24/7 community information and referral helplines. They also have specialized websites and directories including community, health, social and related government services in Ontario. As the SIU is now accessible to the public on this platform, there are more ways by which a person can find information about the SIU.

Based on analytics provided by the 211 Ontario website, from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, there were 44,196 contacts reported, out of which 6.49% or 2,805 contacts were for legal/public safety needs.

## Outreach Program Statistics

SIU has committed to collecting data to support its multi-year outreach plan. The following numbers relate to the fiscal period:

Audience/Community Group	# of Presentations	# of Attendees
Secondary/Post Secondary Students	21	1681
Indigenous Peoples	2	200
Police Services	4	440
Open Streets Hamilton*	1	15,000
Toronto Diversity Festival (Moksha Canada)*	1	140,000
Diwali Festival (Moksha Canada)*	1	100,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>257,321</b>
<i>*These numbers provided by the agency hosting the event.</i>		

## Investing in Youth and Planning for the Future

### Student Programs

The SIU engages in various cooperative and student placements throughout the year to give youth a chance to work in their field of study. These school placements provide the opportunity for younger students to gain experience and skills in various areas that support their studies.

Some examples of skills and experiences gained by students over their placements include:

- Collecting data and supporting administrative functions
- Assisting with legal research
- Attending court and observing proceedings
- Attending training and outreach sessions
- Learning about investigative processes and forensic investigations/observing investigations
- Participating in investigation-related exercises (mock interviews, preparation of investigative reports, etc.)

The SIU participated in the Ontario Public Service Summer Employment Opportunity (SEO) Program with three summer students in 2023.

### ***Student Showcase - Summer Students***

#### ***Andrew Chan***

Andrew graduated from the University of Toronto Mississauga in June 2023 with an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree, specializing in political science and history. Previously, Andrew worked as a political science research assistant and as a student intern at the Museums of Mississauga. In September 2023, Andrew began his graduate studies at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto, working towards a Master of Global Affairs.

#### ***Musaab Haque***

Musaab is currently attending Toronto Metropolitan University and is working towards a Bachelor of Commerce under the Ted Rogers School of Management, majoring in Business Technology Management. During his first year of studies, Musaab completed various workshops in software including Excel, Power BI, and Tableau. At the end of his first year, Musaab received recognition through the Top 10% Student Engagement Award. In September 2023, Musaab returned to school to start the 2nd year of his studies.

#### ***Chelsea Chen***

Chelsea graduated in June 2023 from the University of Toronto Mississauga with an Honours Bachelor of Science degree, specializing in Statistics with a minor in Mathematics. She previously worked as a teaching assistant for two courses. In 2024, Chelsea is planning to start her graduate studies, working towards a Masters of Data Science or Data Analytics

### **The SIU Co-Op Outreach Experience: Toronto Diversity Festival – City of Toronto**

*“It was a wonderful experience for me to participate in the Toronto Diversity Festival! Everyone celebrated their cultural diversity there, and I really enjoyed the cultural exchange in a harmonious atmosphere. There were a variety of multicultural performances, and we were swaying and waving with the music and drums, which made me feel closer to the people and our community.*

*Working with the SIU outside of the office was a new thing to me. We introduced ourselves to the people and gave them brochures and souvenirs. I was surprised that many people were willing to ask us questions and wanted to know more about the SIU. It motivated me a lot! Some people shared their own experiences and discussed with us. I heard their stories, and we had a deep and meaningful communication.*

*Through this event, I also got to know the SIU more which was amazing! I got a good understanding as to why we need to have an outreach program. Outreach allows us to show our work to the public and build closer relationships with the community. I’m grateful for this opportunity, it was valuable life experience!” **Rochelle Plummer***

In the Fall of 2023, resulting from SIU's partnership with the University of Guelph-Humber to support students in the Justice Studies program, two students were successful in obtaining co-op placements at the SIU. In addition, based on outreach efforts, three local secondary school students were selected to complete their placements at SIU.

### ***Special Investigations Unit: Student Showcase - Co-op Placements***

#### ***Sophia Aguirre***

*I am a Grade 11 student attending Michael Power St. Joseph Catholic High School. I am aiming to get a bachelor's degree in criminology, then attend Toronto police college where I can work my way up to become a detective. I hope to gain skills I can use later in my career.*

#### ***Rochelle Plummer***

*Rochelle is currently enrolled at the University of Guelph-Humber and will graduate this June with an Honours Bachelor of Applied Science degree, specializing in Police Foundations. Rochelle previously graduated from Sheridan College with a Diploma in Community and Justice studies. Next year she plans to start her graduate studies, working towards an Ontario Graduate Certificate in Forensic Identification.*

#### ***Johan Williams***

*Johan Williams joins the SIU as Coop Student. He is currently in his final semester in the Justice Studies program at the University of Guelph-Humber. Prior to his current studies, Johan completed the Police Foundations program at Humber College and participated in the Youth in Policing Initiative. Johan is also a licensed security officer and works as a security guard for the Scarborough Health Network. Johan's career goal is to become a police detective focusing on sexual-based crime.*

#### ***Anita Denha***

*Currently in Grade 11, Anita joins us as a co-placement from Michael Power St. Joseph High School. Anita has an interest in law and hopes to gain valuable work experience and further her knowledge in the field of law, while experiencing a Cooperative Education Placement at the Special Investigations Unit.*

*She also has a passion for helping others and is looking to expand her experience with this opportunity.*

#### ***Elia Michael Pizzonia***

*Currently in Grade 11, Elia joins us as a co-placement student from Father John Redmond Catholic Secondary School. Elia hopes to attend business school for his undergraduate degree and continue on to law school, hoping to practice as a lawyer one day. Through this placement,*

## Take Our Kids to Work Day

On November 1, 2023, SIU hosted Take Our Kids to Work Day. A total of twenty-one students participated.

The day's agenda included a mock investigation in which staff participated in various roles. The participants learned about the SIU, including its grassroots history and continuing mission. At the end of the day, students presented their findings to the Director.

### **Student Experience at SIU - Rochelle Plummer**

*I was afforded the opportunity to do my co-op placement at the SIU as a 4th year Justice Studies student at the University of Guelph-Humber. I was given a warm and enthusiastic welcome. The staff took an interest in my aspiration of pursuing a career in Forensic Identification and Crime Scene Investigation. I met a great deal of the staff and made some contacts with people interested in my career development. During my time here, I gave a brief presentation at the Black History Month gathering where I shared some noteworthy figures in today's community. Additionally, I assisted with some legal research on the use of body-worn cameras by police, elaborating on both the advantages and disadvantages. My time here allowed me to observe the training of newly hired members of the Identification team as well as the First Nations, Métis & Inuit Liaison program training that elaborated on how to interact with members of this community in a non-police capacity. Finally, I was tasked with the revision of SIU's legislations and regulations, updating some of the new changes made this year. This placement allowed me to get a well-rounded feel of what the SIU does, how it operates and how the staff collaborates. Overall, my experience was positive, educational and an amazing networking opportunity.*

## Communications

### Communication with the Media

The SIU recognizes the importance of providing accurate and timely information on its cases to the public it services. The SIU's media relations team, based out of the SIU's headquarters in Mississauga, is comprised of two Communications Coordinators who work on a rotating basis to respond to media inquiries 24/7.

Between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024, the SIU received hundreds of requests from members of the media via email, phone and text. For high-profile cases, a spokesperson will, whenever possible, travel to the scene and provide information to media on site. Given the large size of Ontario, for cases that occur at a great distance, the spokesperson will speak to the media remotely via Skype, FaceTime or Zoom.

Here are some of the ways the SIU communicates information about its cases:

- **Status of SIU Cases chart** - In an effort to keep the public up-to-date on the progress of all SIU investigations, the Unit provides updates on each and every investigation via an online chart: [https://www.siu.on.ca/en/case\\_status.php](https://www.siu.on.ca/en/case_status.php). Cases are searchable by case number, police service, year, status, and case type.
- **Breakdown of Occurrences** - The SIU continues to track its total caseload by type since its inception in 1990. This information is available here: [https://siu.on.ca/en/report\\_occurrences.php](https://siu.on.ca/en/report_occurrences.php)
- **Director's Reports** - At the conclusion of an SIU investigation, if the evidence does not satisfy the Director that there are reasonable grounds to lay criminal charges, a Director's Report is produced and published on the SIU's website.
- **Social Media** – The SIU posts all its news releases on the SIU's X (formerly known as Twitter) account. Follow the SIU here: <https://twitter.com/SIUOntario>

Members of the media can contact the SIU's media relations team at [siu.media@ontario.ca](mailto:siu.media@ontario.ca)

### SIU's X Account

Over the last year, the SIU's X account has gained about 5,000 followers for a total of more than 22,000 followers. In that time, the SIU's posts made about one million impressions (anytime a user sees a post) and had an average 6.2 % engagement rate. For context, a 1 % engagement rate is considered positive.

### Balancing Transparency with the Investigation

The tension between the need for an agency such as the SIU to share information with the public and the obligation to keep certain information confidential because of legal and policy restrictions presents a constant challenge. This requires a balancing act, as the needs and sensitivities of the media, affected persons, next of kin, the community, law enforcement and the SIU must all be considered within a legislative framework. It is imperative to ensure that the information released is fair, does not prejudice the investigation and does not violate the privacy rights of those involved.

Keeping the public informed about the SIU's investigations is a key part of the organization's commitment to transparency and accountability. One of the ways the SIU accomplishes this is through news releases. News releases may be issued when the SIU invokes its mandate and launches an investigation or provides an update on an ongoing investigation. A news release is also typically issued at the end of an investigation, whether it was concluded via a criminal charge, Director's Report (no charge) or a case closure by memo.



## News Releases

Over the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the SIU issued an average of nearly 38 news releases every month for a total of 448 news releases. Members of the public are welcome to subscribe to the SIU's news releases on the SIU website: [https://siu.on.ca/en/news\\_subscription.php](https://siu.on.ca/en/news_subscription.php)

**Director's Report:** In 2023-2024, the agency published 266 news releases accompanying the Director's Report. In cases where the Director found no evidence to proceed with criminal charges against the police official(s) involved, a Director's Report is published on the SIU website as well as an accompanying news release. The Director's Report provides a summary of the investigation and evidence gathered, and the findings of fact by the Director that led to the decision.

**Case Closed by Memo:** In cases found to fall outside the SIU's jurisdiction, such as when the affected person did not suffer a serious injury, the Director will terminate the investigation and issue a memo that outlines the reasons for the decision. When this occurs, the Director does not render a decision as to whether a criminal charge is warranted in the case or not. These matters may be referred to other law enforcement agencies for investigation. A news release is issued in every case closed by memo; 57 news releases of this type were published in 2023-2024.

**Case Update:** During an investigation, an update to the status of the investigation may be provided via a news release. During 2023-2024, five news releases were issued to provide status updates during an investigation.

**Initial:** At the beginning of an investigation, an initial news release will be issued for cases involving a death, a firearm discharge at a person, major collision, or other high-profile matter. In 2023-2024, 107 initial news releases were issued.

**Charge Laid:** If the Director finds evidence to lay criminal charges against a police official, charges will be laid, and a news release issued with the official's name, charge(s) and court date. Eleven news releases were issued of this nature in 2023-2024.

**Other:** There were two news releases issued on other topics

## Blue Line Magazine Article

The SIU was featured in the online edition of Blue Line Magazine. The article notes that fiscal 2021-2022 was the busiest in the history of the SIU and highlights the important work the Unit does, including that of the unit's forensics team. The full article can be viewed at: <https://www.blueline.ca/ontarios-special-investigations-unit-busiest-year-on-record-for-police-oversight/>

## SIU Appears on 'Crime Beat'

On January 5, 2023, Global TV's 'Crime Beat', a true crime weekly program, featured a case that involved a police shooting and a SIU investigation. Alexander Bates was shot and injured by a Niagara Regional Police Service officer in December 2018. The SIU investigated the shooting and found it was legally justified. The program focused on the events before the shooting and the impact of those events on the victims of Mr. Bates' violence.

## Modernizing Technology

During the past year, the SIU advanced one of the agency's key priorities of developing a modern workplace by building on last year's work of implementing new technologies. These technologies will make assist SIU personnel to more efficiently and effectively carrying their work.

### Niche Records Management System

The SIU replaced its case management system with Niche RMS, which is specifically designed for law enforcement organizations. It is configured to support highly sensitive data with more functionality to better manage investigations. The system will also assist in driving innovation at the SIU through its ability to generate data reports.

### Portable Fingerprinting Technology

The SIU acquired new Livescan fingerprinting technology as part of a larger national project to move to electronic submission of fingerprints to the federal fingerprint repository.

The new technology will increase the accuracy and timelines of these records. It will also enable SIU investigators to travel with the device to distant locales to take fingerprints where necessary, obviating the need for charged officers in those locales to have to travel to the SIU's offices for that purpose.

### Electronic Survey for Race-Based Data Collection

The SIU's Affected Persons Program oversees the SIU's collection of race-based data from the persons impacted by its investigations. Work is underway to move from a paper-based survey to an electronic data collection tool, which can be expected to improve response rates.

### SIU Digital Workplace and Wi-Fi Service

The SIU has upgraded its office network to include access to the Ontario Public Service's Wi-Fi service. The wi-fi service has allowed staff to collaborate and work together in new ways. For example, regional staff who visit the SIU's offices now have the ability to easily connect to the OPS network from anywhere in the office without needing to be assigned a desk or office.

### Replacement of Legacy Telephone System

During the past year, the SIU modernized its office telephone system to better meet its current and future needs. The SIU replaced its traditional copper landline service with a new Microsoft Teams-based Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone service.

The new phone system allows staff to access their landline number entirely through their computer or mobile phone using the Microsoft Teams application without having to be physically at the office.

## Training

The SIU is committed to the continuous training of its staff in the areas of investigative best practices, cultural competency, administration, management, law, and information technology.

### Specialized Training Courses

SIU staff received training in the following areas during the past year:

- Vicarious Trauma Awareness
- The Canadian Criminal Law System
- Sexual Assault Cases in the Criminal Courts
- Criminal Investigators Training
- Strategic Policing through Action and Character
- Ontario Police College's Forensic Identification Recertification Exam.

### SIU Onboarding and Orientation Program

The SIU held several training sessions in 2023/24 to onboard and orient a total of 15 new staff. Topics covered included:

- Authority for SIU Investigators
- Applications for Search Warrants
- The SIU Director's Authority to Lay Charges
- Criminal Negligence, Failure to Provide the Necessaries of Life, and the Legal Test for Justifiable Use of Force
- Ontario Use of Force Model
- Police Firearms & Other Use of Force Tools
- Driving Investigations, Subject Apprehension Pursuits, and Collision Reconstruction
- Note-taking and Use of Official Memo Books
- Investigative File Reports
- Processing Cases Expediently without Sacrificing Quality
- Sexual Assault Investigations
- Custody Injuries

- Death Investigations
- Control of an Incident Scene
- Conducting Parallel Investigations
- SIU Investigations Resulting in Criminal Charges
- Investigative Interviewing

### Ontario Public Service (OPS) Courses

As part of the OPS's mandatory training, staff completed the following courses:

- Exploring the Roots of Racism
- Respectful Workplace Policy and the WDHP Program
- Cyber Security
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Workplace Violence Prevention
- Access Forward – Customer Service Standard
- Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)
- Working Together - The OHRC and the AODA

### Niche RMS

As part of the implementation of its new case management solution (Niche RMS), SIU staff completed a comprehensive training program, including interactive demonstrations and trials with bi-weekly review and support sessions to ensure strong technical proficiency.

### Forensic Investigators Training

The forensic identification team met together several times in the year to complete training and to further expand the use of recently acquired 3D Scanners in alignment with the unit's commitment to implementing leading-edge technology.

The forensic identification team also completed five days training on the Leica Map 360 Scene Diagramming and Accident Reconstruction software to support the creation of diagrams and content for SIU Director's Reports.

### Health & Safety

SIU staff participated in emergency medical response training, including First Aid, CPR, Automated External Defibrillator (AED), and the emergency use of naloxone in the event of an opioid overdose.

# Diversity Equity & Inclusion at the SIU

Diversity, equity and inclusion are core to the business of the SIU and embedded within all programs and work. An SIU that reflects the communities it serves, values fairness within its walls and in the delivery of its services to the public, and gives everyone a voice at the table, is a better SIU.

The following were some of the SIU's efforts towards diversity, equity, and inclusion this past year.

## Anti-Bias Training

The SIU held two days of anti-bias training for all its staff. These sessions were facilitated by a prominent academic in the field from the University of Waterloo. The talks considered bias in its myriad forms, the impact of bias on the work of the SIU, and anti-bias measures.

## Anti-Racism and Diversity

SIU continues to make progress in educating staff about race, racial discrimination, and human rights protections under Ontario's Human Rights Code. As part of its Anti-Racism Road Map to address systemic racism and its commitment to a fair and diverse workforce, SIU staff participated in a variety of cultural competency learning opportunities throughout the year. The topics covered included the history of police oversight as it relates to Black Canadians, contemporary issues, and the need for action.

## Black History Month at the SIU

On February 14, 2024, the first Black Regimental Sergeant Major for the Toronto Scottish Regiment provided an inspiring and informative presentation as part of SIU's Black History Month event. He delved into the remarkable history of the No. 2 Construction Battalion, the first and only all-Black construction unit in World War I. He also highlighted his important role as a member of the National Apology Advisory Committee.

## First Nations Cultural Awareness Training

On June 19 and 20, 2023, the SIU welcomed a member of the Red-tailed Hawk (Gibwanasii) Clan, with over 33 years of policing experience, to lead Cultural Mindfulness training sessions. These sessions discussed both his and other Indigenous peoples' experiences throughout Canadian history.

The training was a valuable experience for all who participated, who learned about the history of Indigenous peoples, the beauty of their cultures, and the devastating impacts of colonialism and the residential school system.

## SIU Participates in a Panel Discussion for the Afro-Caribbean Culture Festival

On August 31, 2023, SIU took part in a panel discussion in an event organized by Moksha Canada Foundation for the Afro-Caribbean Cultural Festival. The discussion focused on human services organizations and how best they can promote the values of diversity, inclusion, and equity. The Zoom event was recorded and posted on You Tube.

## Race-Based Data Collection

The SIU is committed to the collection of demographic data, including race-based data, to identify and address racial disparity in the work that it does.

The SIU collects personal information from affected persons and subject officials about their age, Indigenous identity, ethnic/cultural origin, race, religion/spiritual affiliation, and gender identity. Participation is voluntary.

Personal information collected from affected persons and subject officials, over the period October 2020 to September 2021, was recorded, de-identified and readied for analysis in partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University. After consultation with the Director's Resource Committee, the report was publicly released on October 17, 2023. It can be found on the SIU's website or here: <https://www.siu.on.ca/the-siu-and-race-based-data-collection-en8895>. The report drew attention to the low response rates and made recommendations for improvement. The SIU has since begun the process of transitioning to an electronic online survey with the hope of encouraging more affected persons and subject officials to participate in the process.

## First Nations, Inuit and Métis Liaison Program

The First Nations, Inuit and Métis Liaison Program (FNIMLP) was created in early 2006 to address the unique needs and concerns of Indigenous people and communities as it relates to police oversight. It does so principally by relationship-building between the SIU and Indigenous communities with the aim of facilitating SIU investigations involving or impacting Indigenous persons or interests.

The members of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Liaison Program have the following responsibilities:

- Attend culturally appropriate Indigenous training at least once per year
- Assist with the development and implementation of Indigenous training for all SIU staff
- Assist with the development and delivery of outreach initiatives to Indigenous persons, organizations, and communities, and developing and maintaining a positive professional relationship with leaders and representatives of Indigenous organizations and communities
- Track investigative and outreach activities to assist with reporting stats

Whenever possible, a member of the program leads or participates in investigations involving Indigenous peoples or communities to ensure that investigations are conducted with respect and sensitivity.

In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, members of the program were involved in 29 new cases involving Indigenous persons.

### SIU Meets with Wikwemikong First Nation

On April 17, 2023, SIU representatives attended at Wikwemikong First Nation on Manitoulin Island at the band's invitation. The SIU spoke to the band council about the agency, including its history, mandate, investigative protocols, Affected Persons Program and First Nations, Inuit and Métis Liaison Program. The meeting was among a series of outreach sessions to Indigenous groups by the SIU as they consider whether they want to opt into SIU oversight, with the introduction of the coming into force in the new year of the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*.

### SIU Meets with Grand Council Chief of the Anishinabek Nation

On May 9, 2023, the SIU hosted a meeting with Anishinabek Nation (AN) Grand Council Chief, who attended the SIU's offices with his team. The AN is a political advocate for 39 member First Nations across Ontario, from Golden Lake in the east, Sarnia in the south, and Thunder Bay and Lake Nipigon in the north, serving an approximate combined population of 65,000 First Nations persons.

The meeting was an opportunity for the SIU to discuss the *Special Investigations Unit Act, 2019*, to profile its case load statistics, and to learn more about the AN and its needs.

### SIU Meets with Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition

On May 11, 2023, the SIU met with the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition. The coalition is a group of about ten agencies providing front-line programs and services to Indigenous persons living in the National Capital Region.

The coalition had originally reached out to meet with the SIU following its release of the Director's Report in the case of the shooting death of Gregory Ritchie – an Indigenous person – at the hands of Ottawa police in January 2019. That meeting had been cancelled due to the pandemic.

The May meeting involved a candid exchange of ideas and suggestions between the parties on issues ranging from the SIU's policies and practices in investigations involving Indigenous persons, to the cultural competency of its staff with respect to Indigenous peoples and communities. While recognizing the limited criminal investigative mandate of the SIU, the group encouraged the Unit to seek opportunities to raise systemic issues at the root of SIU cases, particularly as they impact Indigenous persons. Both sides committed to regular dialogue moving forward.

### First Nations Cultural Awareness and Indigenous Protocol Training

The SIU's First Nations, Inuit and Métis Liaison Program hosted a training on March 1, 2024, to provide members with specific skills and tools to conduct investigations involving First Nations communities. The facilitator grew up in Constance Lake First Nation and was a member of Marten Falls First Nation Band. His career began as a police officer and is currently the Chair of the First Nation Emergency Response Association.

### First Nations, Inuit, Métis Liaison Program Outreach

On September 28, 2023, North Region SIU staff participated in the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) "Connecting Youth & Community" Student Orientation in Timmins, Ontario.

Nishnawbe Aski (The People and the Land) Nation represents 49 First Nations, encompassing James Bay Treaty No. 9 and the Ontario portion of Treaty No. 5, a landmass covering two-thirds of the Province of Ontario.

Nearly 100 students from across NAN had the opportunity to interact with community organizations to learn about the various services, careers, and recreation programming available in the area. Most students have relocated to Timmins to attend secondary school and have limited exposure to urban settings.

### Thunder Bay Outreach

On January 31, 2024, two FNIMLP members attended the Confederation College Career Fair in Thunder Bay where they were able to engage with hundreds of students and graduates from the Thunder Bay area.

Other exhibitors at the Fair included Nishnawbe–Aski Legal Services Corporation, Indigenous Services Canada, Sioux Lookout First Nation Health Authority, Thunder Bay Police Service, Tikinagan Child & Family Services, Atikokan Health & Community Services, and multiple Indigenous District School Boards.

Through this initiative, the SIU was able to explore relationships with multiple Indigenous agencies, including the Ontario Native Women's Association, Anishnabek Family Care and Beendigen: Anishinabe Women's Crisis Home & Family Healing Agency, which serve and support vulnerable populations in the area.

### Indigenous OPS Wellness Day

On March 27, 2024, the SIU attended the first Indigenous OPS Wellness Day, in Sudbury, Ontario. The day was designed to support the culturally specific mental health and well-being of First Nations, Inuit and Métis employees in the OPS. The event considered ways in which the OPS Journey can better attract and retain Indigenous employees.



## SIU Meets with the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service

On March 27, 2024, the SIU met virtually with the executive members of the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service. The meeting was intended as an introduction to open dialogue in advance of the coming into force of the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*.

# Affected Persons Program

## Overview

The Affected Persons Program is a crucial component of the SIU, providing support services to those negatively impacted by incidents investigated by the Unit. The program aims to respond to the emotional and practical needs of SIU complainants, their loved ones, witnesses, and community members by offering immediate crisis support, information, guidance, advocacy, resources and referrals.

Through the Affected Persons Program, the SIU's Affected Persons Coordinators (APC's) provide support services to affected persons from the outset of the investigation, throughout the investigative process and its conclusion. They also provide direct support to SIU victims and witnesses throughout the criminal court process and during criminal justice and inquest proceedings, when applicable

The program's four Affected Persons Coordinators (APCs) are spread out around the province to assist affected persons in their respective regions – Central/Greater Toronto, West, North and East. This regional approach allows APCs to respond to affected persons and/or their families in a timely manner with each APC possessing knowledge of the resources available in their areas.

APC's are available to respond to calls and assist affected persons 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The program also administers the SIU's collection of race-based data from affected persons and subject officials.

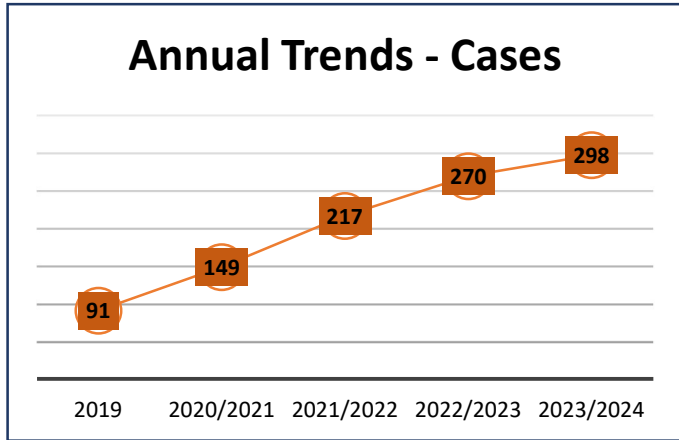
## Fostering Relationships to Enhance Client Support

The creation and maintenance of collaborative relationships with government and community partner agencies across the province continues to be a core value of the Affected Persons Program. These efforts continued throughout 2023-2024, in coordination with the member agencies of the Victim Services Alliance of Ontario, Ontario Network of Victim Service Providers, the Victim Witness Assistance Program, the Office of the Chief Coroner, and the Ontario Forensic Pathology Service.

The Affected Persons Program pursued various outreach activities and consultative services throughout the fiscal year, including with the Ontario's Native Women's Association, Temagami First Nation, and Nishnawbe Aski Nation student events. French-speaking program members proudly offered outreach presentations in French to several student audiences.

## Statistics

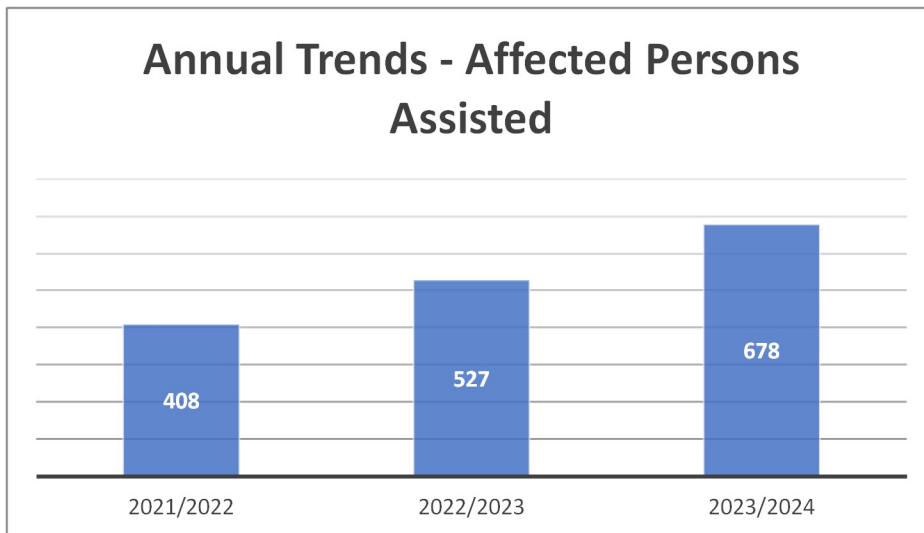
The year was another significant year of growth for the program. From April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024, it was involved in **298** cases, including **35** cases that required court support services.\*



This represented a **10%** increase in program case involvement when compared to the last 12-month reporting period. The Program supported **678** affected persons in the fiscal year, representing a **28%** increase when compared to the previous reporting period.\*

SIU victims were offered support through the court process in **100%** of cases that resulted in a criminal charge(s) against a police official.

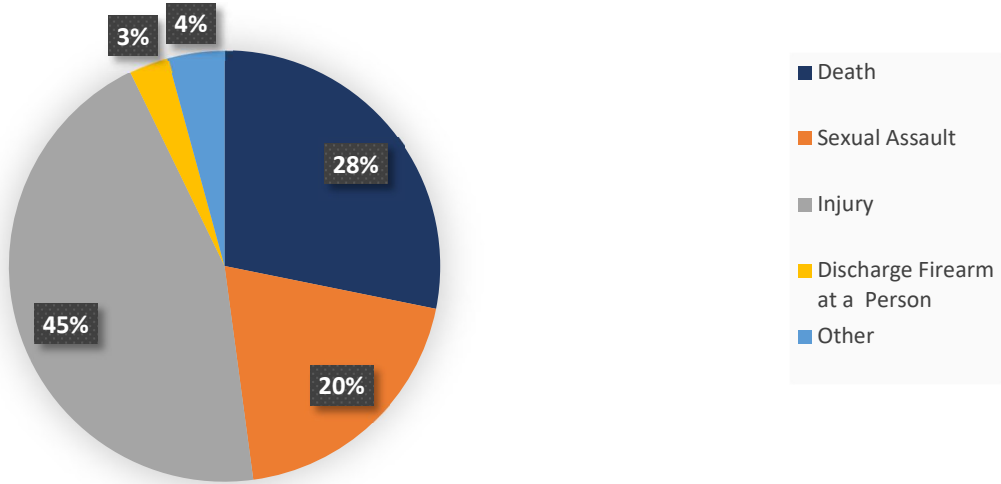
\*Some cases are referred to the program outside of the year they occurred and/or support is provided by Affected Persons Program staff beyond the year the investigation was launched. Each case may include providing support to more than one affected person.



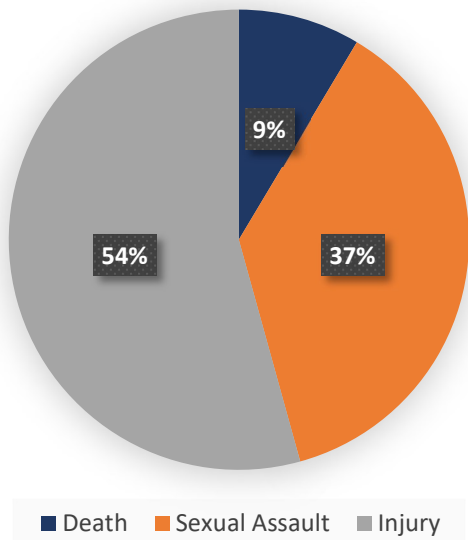
## Types of Assistance

Affected Persons Coordinators assisted with the completion of 45 next-of-kin death notifications, attended 57 scenes to support affected persons (including civilian witnesses) and attended 38 interviews to provide support during the interview process. Each affected person may receive support via more than one format.

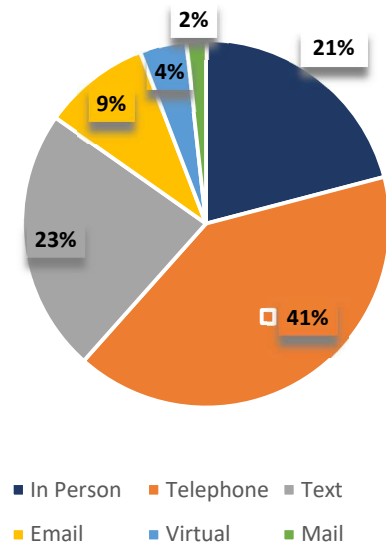
### APP Involvement by Case Type

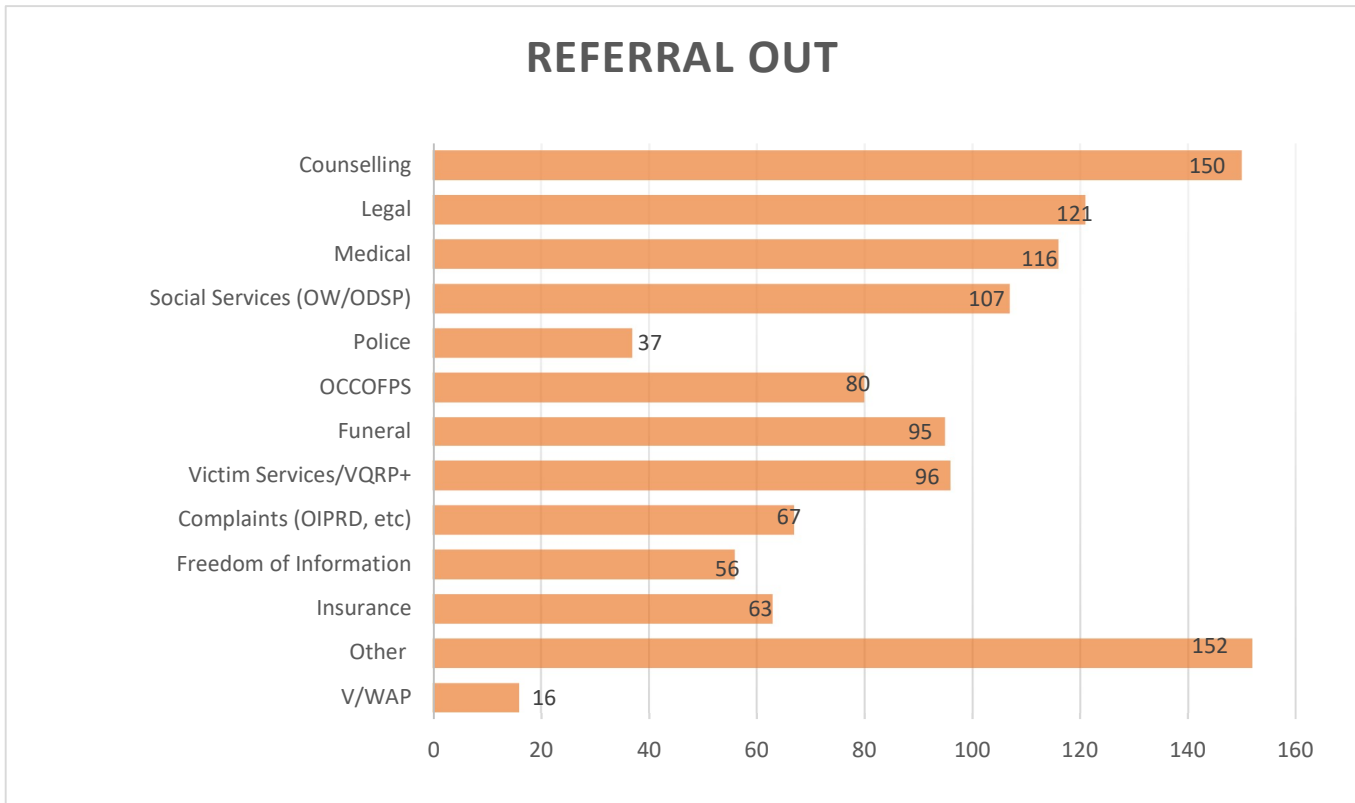
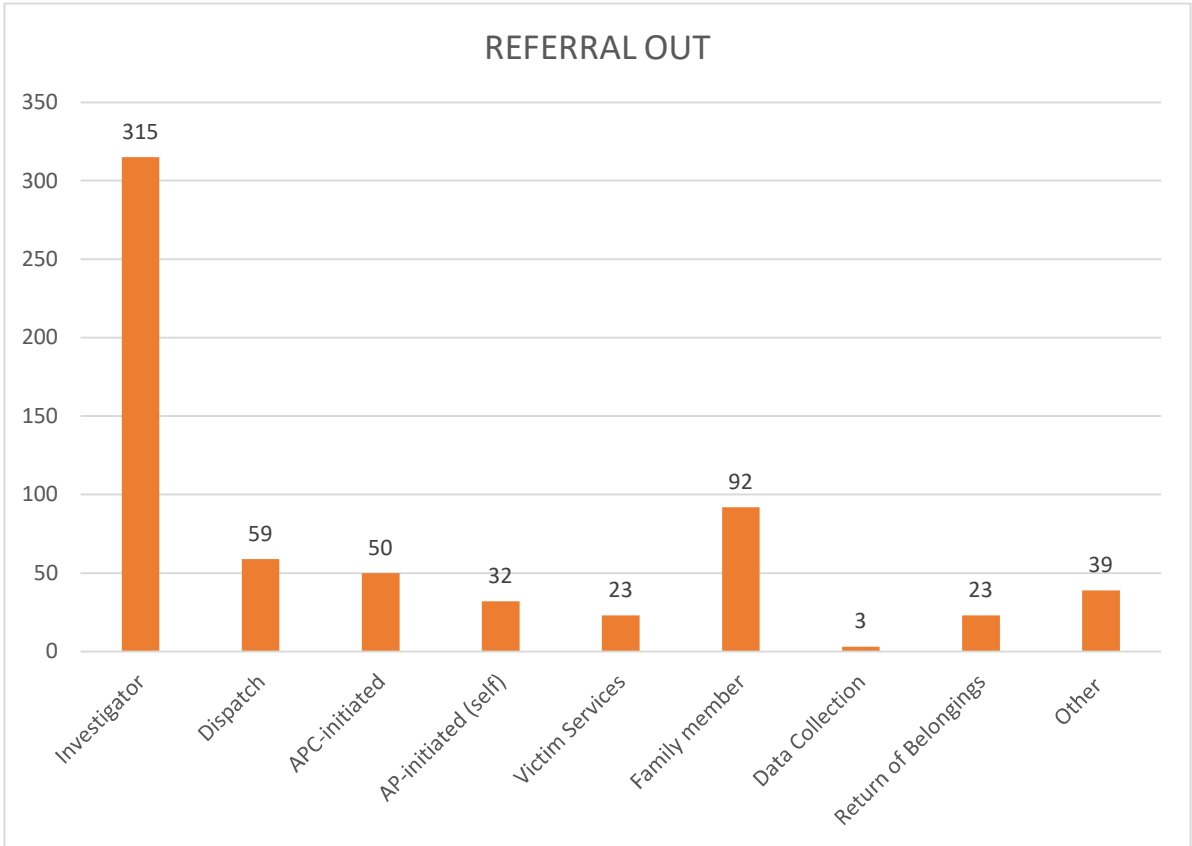


### Court Support By Case Type



### General Support Types





# Investigations

The SIU invokes its mandate when notified of an incident that falls within its jurisdiction.

Investigations begin at the time of notification and entail several actions, including:

- Quick response to an incident
- Examining and securing all physical evidence
- Seeking and interviewing witnesses
- Consulting with the coroner, when required
- Completing investigative file reports for Director’s review and decision
- Forensic scene examination and testing

Central to the work of the SIU is forensics – the collection and analysis of physical evidence. The Forensics Team, quite often the face of the organization as the first to respond to any given scene, is critically important to the conduct of thorough investigations. At any given scene, the team could be taking photographs, collecting blood samples, firearms, projectiles, and cartridge cases, and measuring the spaces in which an incident has occurred.

## Caseload and Occurrence Types

The following table breaks down SIU caseload by occurrence type:

Types of Occurrences	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Firearm Injuries	15	12	12	7	14
Firearm Deaths	9	12	11	11	10
Firearm Discharge at Person		7	34	25	29
Custody Injuries	172	201	209	168	214
Custody Deaths	22	34	29	18	23
Vehicle Injuries	32	49	46	39	47
Vehicle Deaths	6	8	8	4	10
Sexual Assault Complaints	58	63	73	54	53
Other Deaths	5	3	6	8	5
Other Injuries	0	1	2	1	0
NJCs					146
<b>Total</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>551</b>
Total-excluding NJCs					<b>405</b>

### Caseload Analysis

Since the implementation of its own legislation, caseload has increased, mainly due to the new case category of Firearm Discharge at a Person.

In 2023-2024, 551 cases were opened with **405** investigations conducted, an increase of 70 investigations from the previous year:

- Custody Injury cases accounted for approximately half (52.8%) of the total occurrences
- Sexual Assault Complaints cases remained the second highest type of occurrence reported
- Firearm Discharge at a Person, a fairly new category of case, comprised 7.2% of the SIU's total caseload, consistent with the trend in 2022-23

### Non-Jurisdictional Cases

Non-Jurisdictional Cases (NJC) are cases that have been assessed by the Investigative Manager upon intake where a Lead Investigator is not assigned. The assessment and subsequent investigation, if required, is conducted by the Investigative Manager to make the determination if the reported incident falls within the SIU mandate. The incidents that do not meet the threshold, are classified as Non-Jurisdictional Cases. These cases are not counted as SIU occurrences but contribute and are counted as part of SIU's caseload.

### Case Closures

In 2023-2024, the SIU closed 489 cases, including re-opened cases. This figure consisted of all occurrences from previous years that were closed during the fiscal year and excluded cases that remained open at the end of March 2024.

Case Closures	2023-2024
Number of cases closed	383
Number of cases closed by memo	72 (18.8%)
Number of cases closed by Director's Report	299 (78.1%)
Average number of days to close all cases	126.2
Average number of days to close a memo case	105.8
Average number of days to close a Director's Report case	126.1
Number of cases closed in 120 days or less	342
Percentage of cases closed in 120 days or less	89.3%
Number of cases in which criminal charges were laid	12
Number of officers charged	13

### Cases Closed by Memo

Seventy-two cases were closed by memo in 2023-2024, or 18.8%. After the opening of an investigation file, these cases were eventually deemed to not fall under the SIU jurisdiction.

In these types of cases, the SIU Director exercises discretion and ‘terminates’ all further SIU involvement, filing a memo to that effect with the Deputy Attorney General.

### Cases Closed by Director’s Report

The number of cases closed in this period by Director’s Report was 299, or 78.1%.

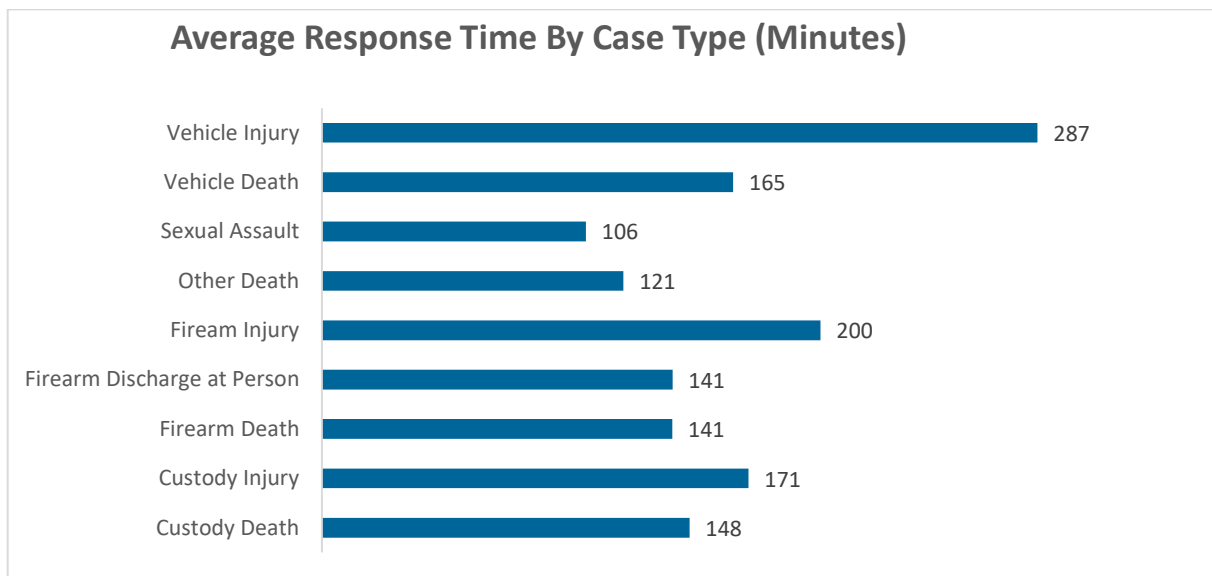
### Charge Cases

Criminal charges were laid by the SIU Director in 12 cases, against a total of 13 officers, representing about 2.5% of the total cases.

The charges do not represent a finding of criminal wrongdoing – only that there were reasonable grounds to believe that an offence was committed. A court hearing the charges ultimately determines guilt or innocence.

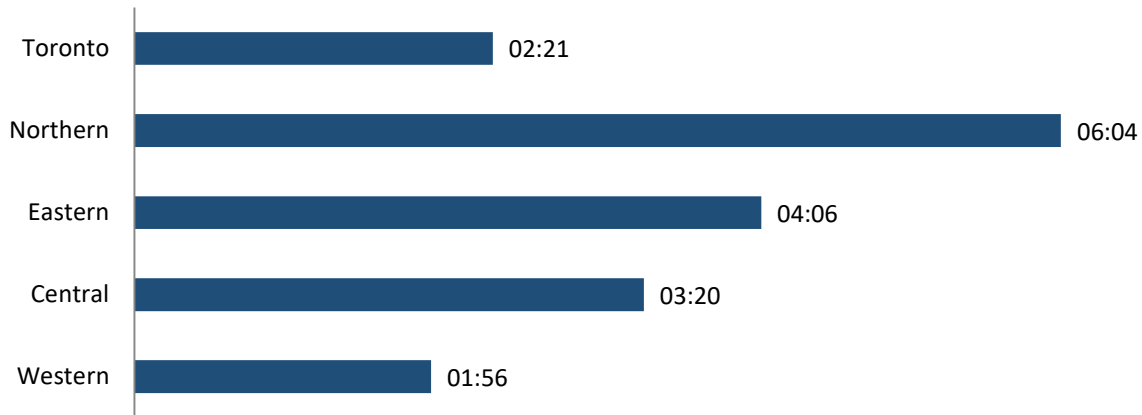
### Investigative Response

The SIU tracks the time it takes for investigators to respond to an incident, and the number of investigators deployed to the scene.





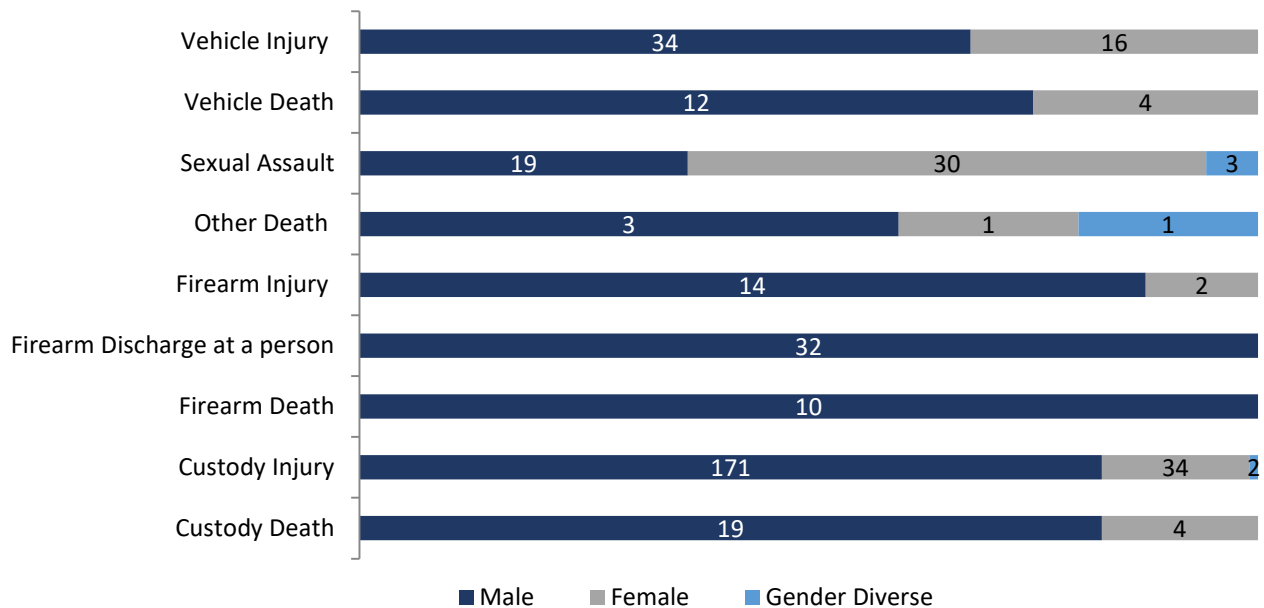
### Average Response Time by Region (Hours: Minutes)



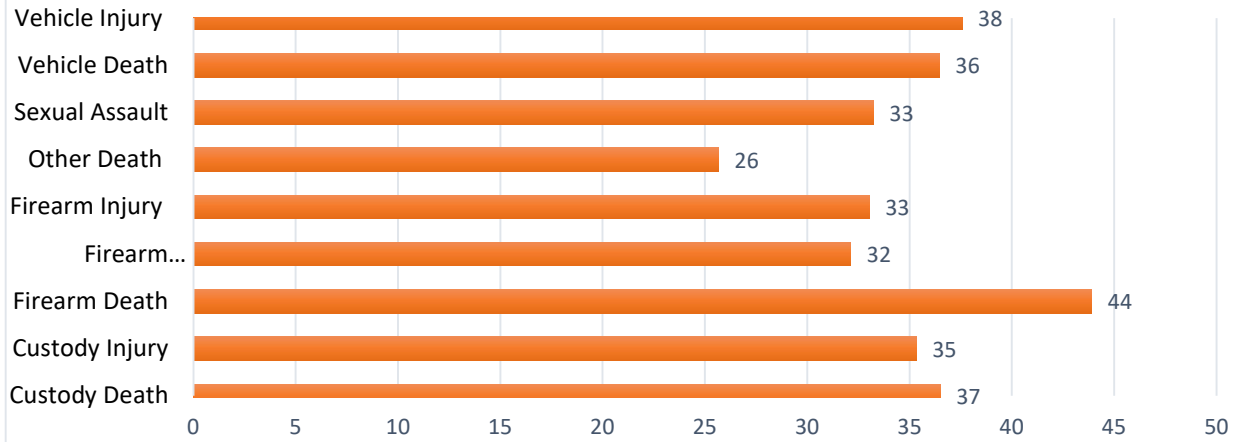
### Information about Affected Persons

Affected Persons are individuals who are directly involved in an occurrence investigated by the SIU as a result of interactions with police. There may be more than one Affected Person per SIU case.

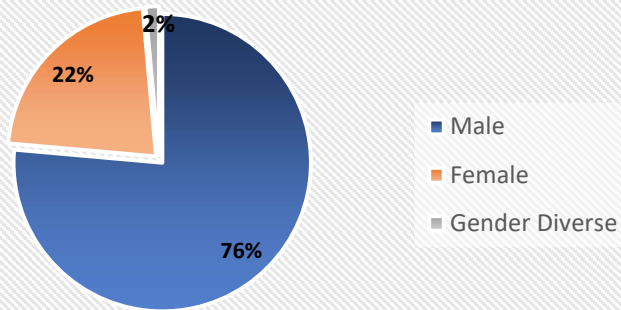
### Number of Male & Female Affected Persons by Case Type



### Average Age of Affected Person by Case Type (Years)



### Percentage of Affected Persons by Sex



# Performance Measures

Performance Measures	Target	Actual 2023-2024
Percentage of Cases Closed Within 120 days or Less	80%	89.3%
Percentage of Death and Sexual Assault Cases in which the SIU Affected Persons Program Engaged	100%	100%
Percentage of Death and Firearm Cases in which Media Release Issued at the Beginning and End of Case	100%	100%

## Average Number of Days to Close a Case

The SIU aims to complete its investigations within 120 days.

- In 2023-2024, it took 105.8 days to close a case by memo and 126.1 days to close by Director's Report. There were 342 cases that were closed in 120 days or less, or 89.3% of total cases.

## News Release in all Death and Firearm Cases

The Unit is committed to issuing a news release at the start and end of any investigation where there was a death, or an official discharged a firearm.

- In 2023-2024, the agency fully met this performance target.

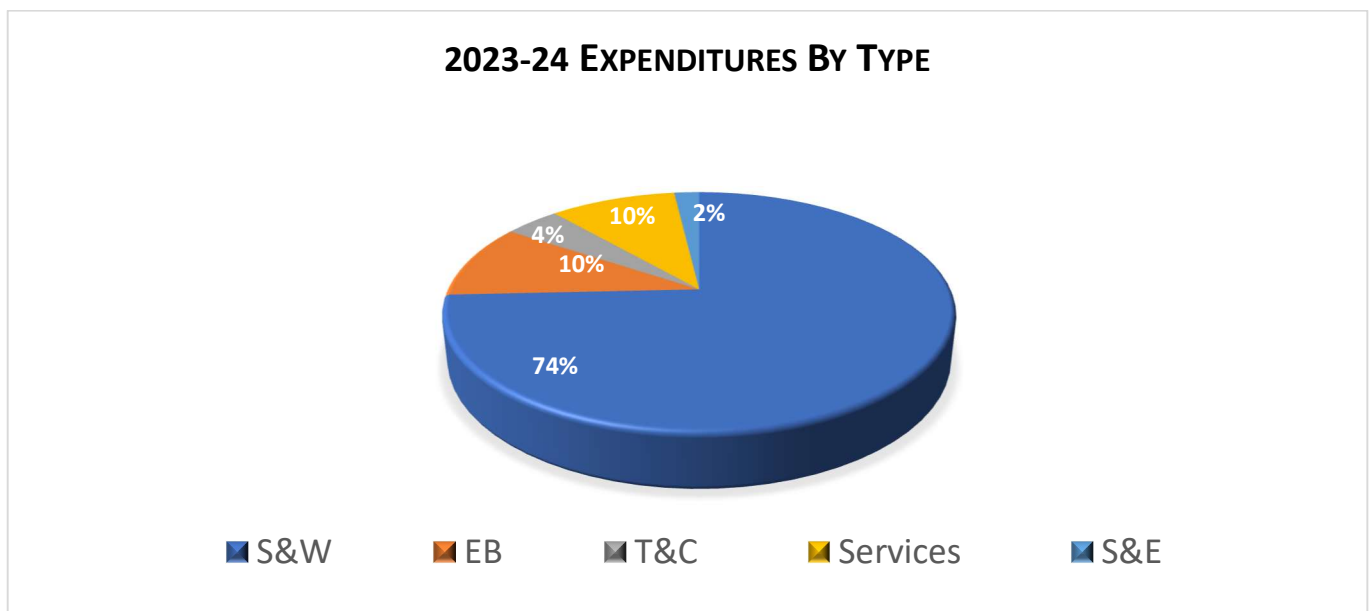
# 2023-2024 Financials

## 2023-24 Expenditures by Type

Total Expenditures for the year ended March 31, 2024, were \$11,647,361.

2023-24 Expenditures by Type	Annual Expenditures (\$000)	% of Expenditures
Salaries and Wages (S&W)	\$8,650,909	74.3%
Employee Benefits (EB)	\$1,171,869	10.1%
Transportation & Communication	\$488,798	4.2%
Services	\$1,115,095	9.6%
Supplies and Equipment (S&E)	\$220,690	1.9%
<b>Total Annual Expenditures</b>	<b>\$11,647,361</b>	<b>100%</b>

Staff Training Expenditures were \$ 81,721.00 (0.7%) of 2023-24 Year End Budget.



SIU Director's Expense Information

The release of expense information ensures that taxpayer dollars are used prudently and responsibly with a focus on accountability and transparency. The Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive requires the posting of expense information by designated individuals and appointees in every provincial agency. As a provincial agency, the SIU is required to post the Director's expense report. For the 2023-24 fiscal period, the Director's expenses total was \$1,532.53.

Total Annual Remuneration		
Appointee	Total Annual Remuneration	Per Diem Remuneration Rate
Joseph Martino, Director	\$235,000	N/A

# SIU Organization Chart

