

Questionnaire for Connecticut Inspector General Applicants

1. Do you believe that (a) the Inspector General must acknowledge racial disparities in policing, prosecution, incarceration, and the criminal justice system overall and (b) the Inspector General has a responsibility to take affirmative steps to end systemic racial disparities? Please provide a clear “Yes” or “No” answer to both subparts and any explanation you wish to offer.

(a) Yes – racial disparities, racial discrimination or outcomes resulting from race-based decision-making must be absent from Connecticut’s criminal justice system.

(b) Yes - I believe that the Inspector General (and any other agency head) has a responsibility to insure that all office functions are performed in a nondiscriminatory fashion.

2. Do you believe police officers should be held criminally liable when they cause unnecessary physical harm of Connecticut residents? Please provide a clear “Yes” or “No” answer and any explanation you wish to offer.

Yes. The Inspector General’s Office operates with the statutory authority to expose police officers and/or members of the Department of Corrections and/or members of the Board of Pardons and Paroles who violate state law to criminal liability.

3. Do you believe police officers should be held criminally liable when they unnecessary kill Connecticut residents? Please provide a clear “Yes” or “No” answer and any explanation you wish to offer.

Yes. Within the context of our statute, I believe that the phrase “unnecessary kill” translates to “deadly force.” Therefore, I believe that the Inspector General’s Office operates with the statutory authority to expose police officers and/or members of the Department of Corrections and/or members of the Board of Pardons and Paroles who violate state law in connection with the use of deadly force to criminal liability.

4. Do you believe the current statutory standard for determining when police are allowed to use deadly physical force makes it clear that an officer is only allowed to use deadly physical force when it is absolutely necessary? Please provide a clear “Yes” or “No” answer and any explanation you wish to offer.

Yes. I have examined General Statutes section 53a-22. The language contained in that statute does not require that necessity must be “absolute.” It does, however, describe the standard to be used as one that is “necessary.”

5. Do you believe that the standard in Public Act 21-4 for determining when police are allowed to use deadly physical force, which took effect January 1, 2022, makes it clear that an officer is allowed to use deadly physical force only when it is absolutely necessary? Please provide a clear “Yes” or “No” answer and any explanation you wish to offer.

Yes. I have examined Public Act 21-4. The language contained in that act does not require that necessity must be “absolute.” It does, however, describe the standard to be used as one that is “necessary.”

6. Do you believe police officers should be protected from criminal liability when their use of physical force was reasonable under all the circumstances, but not absolutely necessary? Please provide a clear “Yes” or “No” answer and any explanation you wish to offer.

No. In my view, that is a question best left to our legislature or to our Executive Branch. The Inspector General is obligated to follow the law and apply the standard set forth in the statute to the facts as the Inspector General finds them.

7. Will you commit to holding police accountable by supporting policy proposals that change Connecticut's use of force standard to one in which killings by police are only allowed if it is clear that police did not, through their actions, create a situation in which deadly force was necessary? Please provide a clear “Yes” or “No” answer and any explanation you wish to offer.

Yes, I will, pursuant to General Statute section 53a-22(2), which permits the Inspector General to consider any unreasonable conduct by a police officer, members of the Department of Corrections and/or members of the Board of Pardons and Paroles that may have initially triggered a criminal event which escalated to the use of deadly force.

8. Will you commit to holding police accountable by supporting policy proposals that change Connecticut's use of force standard to one in which killings by police are only allowed if it is clear that the force used by police was the minimum necessary to resolve the situation? Please provide a clear “Yes” or “No” answer and any explanation you wish to offer.

No. “Minimum necessary” is not an articulated standard to apply when determining whether the use of deadly force was justified. I would, however, make a determination whether the use of deadly force falls outside of any of the exceptions provided to a police officer, members of the Department of Corrections and/or members of the Board of Pardons and Paroles.

9. Will you commit to holding police accountable by supporting policy proposals that change Connecticut's use of force standard to one in which killings by police are only allowed if it is clear that the force used by police was necessary because all other available, effective alternatives had been exhausted? Please provide a clear “Yes” or “No” answer and any explanation you wish to offer.

Yes. General Statute 53a-22(c)(1)(B) is an independent clause that allows the Inspector General to examine whether, incident to the use of deadly physical force a police officer, members of the Department of Corrections and/or members of the Board of Pardons and Paroles first reasonably determined that there were “no available reasonable alternatives.”

10. Will you commit to holding an open, public meeting in the community where a police use of deadly force occurred, within 30 days after publishing your report on the investigation, to present your report and provide the community an opportunity to publicly comment on it and/or the incident? Please provide a clear “Yes” or “No” answer and any explanation you wish to offer.

As Inspector General, I would commit to holding an open, public meeting on a case-by-case basis, once my report was made public. My hesitation in committing to holding an open, public meeting in every case is out of respect to the deceased’s family or loved ones. If my report concludes, for instance, that the deceased suffered from extreme mental illness and/or hallucinogenic drug use that required the use of deadly force, I would not want to further embarrass or advertise the frailties of the deceased in an open forum so soon after the event. My report would contain those factors. I would meet privately with the family to discuss those factors. Sometimes, enough is enough.

11. When you investigate a matter, will you commit to investigating the impact the patterns, practices, and/or policies of law enforcement unit(s) involved had on the subject matter under your investigation? Please provide a clear “Yes” or “No” answer and any explanation you wish to offer.

Yes. In my view, patterns, practices and/or policies of the law enforcement unit directly contribute to the conduct – proper or improper – of that unit.

12. Will you commit to making licensure recommendations, including decertification and suspension recommendations, to the Police Officer Standards and Training Council if you find, after complete investigation, that a police officer has:

1. used physical force unjustifiably;
2. engaged in conduct that undermines public confidence in law enforcement, including, but not limited to, discriminatory conduct, falsification of reports, or violating the Alvin W. Penn Racial Profiling Prohibition Act; or
3. violated any policy of the law enforcement unit employing the officer?

Please provide a clear “Yes” or “No” answer to all subparts and any explanation you wish to offer.

Yes, consistent with the following explanation. If, after the investigation is complete, I determined that a police officer’s use of force was not justified and therefore criminal, or was improper but not criminal, I believe that the integrity of the investigation must include recommendations to the Police Officer Standards and Training Council, relative to findings in connection with subparts 1, 2, or 3, above. In my view, recommendations in this regard would be a logical extension of the Inspector General’s acknowledgement that racial

disparities in policing, prosecution, incarceration, and the criminal justice system overall must be addressed. I would not commit to crafting other recommendations that are not relative to subparts 1,2 or 3, above, as those recommendations would fall outside of the Inspector General's authority.

13. If, after a complete investigation, you find that a police officer (a) used physical force unjustifiably and/or (b) engaged in other criminal conduct, will you commit to pursuing justice and redress for such actions to the greatest extent of your discretion? Please provide a clear "Yes" or "No" answer to all subparts and any explanation you wish to offer.

Yes. Prosecuting criminal conduct falls squarely within the Inspector Generals' statutory authority.

14. Will you commit to holding police accountable by (a) supporting the creation of a statewide "Brady List" available to the public upon request, and (b) ensuring police officers that are on the statewide "Brady List" are decertified by the Police Officer Standards and Training Council? Please provide a clear "Yes" or "No" answer to all subparts and any explanation you wish to offer.

No. That would require an almost "blind" adherence to facts, circumstances and findings made by others unaffiliated with the Inspector General's office and may have quite possibly been made prior to the Inspector General's appointment. I feel the Inspector General's involvement in something so attenuated could call into question an Inspector General's fairness and neutrality.

15. Will you commit to fairness and transparency by supporting policy proposals that require uniform policies and procedures to be promulgated by the Division of Criminal Justice Advisory Board for all 13 state's attorneys?

Please provide a clear "Yes" or "No" answer to all subparts and any explanation you wish to offer.

Yes, providing that such support by the Inspector General's office does not conflict with its sworn obligation to follow the law.

Please direct all responses to Chelsea-Infinity Gonzalez at cgonzalez@acluct.org on or before the close of business on April 21, 2025.