



May 21, 2020

Contact:

Redmond Haskins
The Legal Aid Society
929-441-2384
rhaskins@legal-aid.org

*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

***Report: New Yorkers of Color Continue To Shoulder Brunt of NYPD COVID-19
Related Enforcement***

***Analysis of 311 Complaints Shows NYPD Overwhelmingly Targets New Yorkers of
Color for Summonses and Arrests Despite Equal Distribution of Complaints About
Lack of Social Distancing in Majority White Neighborhoods***

(NEW YORK, NY) - The Legal Aid Society released an [analysis](#) today of social distancing enforcement conducted by the New York City Police Department (NYPD) including COVID-19 related 311 complaints, summonses and arrests which reveals that Black and Latino New Yorkers overwhelmingly bear the brunt of this policing despite evidence that complaints about lack of social distancing are more prevalent in other neighborhoods than in majority Black and Latino neighborhoods.

To better understand the disproportionate impacts of the NYPD's COVID-19 related enforcement, the Legal Aid Society analyzed social distancing complaints made through 311 between March 28 and May 12, COVID-19 related summonses reported by the NYPD between March 16 and May 5, and internally-tracked COVID-19 related arrests that took place between March 27 and May 2.

Key findings include:

- Of the 32,293 social distancing 311 complaints analyzed by the Legal Aid Society, slightly less than half (46.2%) of the complaints concerned violations in majority Black and Latino precincts.
- Four of the five precincts that received the most social distancing complaints through 311 were in neighborhoods that are not majority Black or Latino.
- Four of the five precincts with the most COVID-19 related arrests and summonses for which the Legal Aid Society was able to identify a precinct were in neighborhoods that are majority Black or Latino.
- 78.9% of COVID-19 related summonses and 74.1% of COVID-19 related arrests for which the Legal Aid Society was able to identify a precinct occurred in majority Black or Latino precincts.
- 18 of the 20 precincts with the highest rates of known COVID-19 related arrests or summonses per 10,000 people occurred in majority Black or Latino precincts.
- Over the time period reviewed, NYPD responses to 311 complaints for social distancing violations were considerably more likely to result in a summons or arrest in majority Black or Latino precincts.

"These data strongly suggest that social distancing enforcement looks different based on the neighborhood you live in not because social distancing practices are different, but because the NYPD is much more likely to look the other way in white neighborhoods while they ticket and arrest people for the same behavior in Black and Latino neighborhoods," said **Corey Stoughton, Attorney-in-Charge of the Special Litigation Unit with the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society**. "Alongside the Department's own data about enforcement and the spate of disturbing videos documenting aggressive enforcement against people of color, there a powerful case exists for shifting away from a law enforcement strategy and reinvesting resources in a public health approach to this pandemic."

The Legal Aid Society further calls upon Mayor de Blasio to ensure greater transparency and accountability in policing by directing the NYPD to publish demographic and precinct-level information on every summons and arrest related to COVID-19 on a weekly basis.

###

The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 140 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities.

www.legalaidnyc.org