

THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Justice in Every Borough.

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

NYPD Data: New Yorkers of Color Were Subjects of More Than 94 Percent of Marijuana Arrests, Summonses Issued in 2020

Legal Aid Calls on Albany to Enact The Marijuana Regulation And Taxation Act to Ensure that Communities of Color Have Priority Access to Benefits Legalization Will Create

(NEW YORK, NY) – **The Legal Aid Society**, in response to recently released [data](#) from the New York City Police Department (NYPD) showing that New Yorkers of color made up more than [94 percent](#) of arrests and summonses issued for marijuana violations and offenses in 2020, called on Albany to enact the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA) immediately to ensure that the same communities who continue to shoulder the brunt of marijuana prohibition have first access to the benefits of legalization.

According to the data, New Yorkers of color – mostly from Black and Latinx communities – were the subjects of roughly 95 percent of all marijuana arrests and 96 percent of all summonses issued for marijuana possession in 2020.

"The data affirm that New Yorkers of color are still overwhelmingly shouldering the brunt of the NYPD's racist marijuana enforcement while other communities get a free pass," said **Anthony Posada, Supervising Attorney with the Community Justice Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. "To correct the racist origins of the prohibition of marijuana that still very much exists today, Albany must enact the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA) immediately to ensure that our clients, those from criminalized communities, will obtain equity, racial justice, and priority access to the benefits that legalization will create."

Marijuana Arrests
Penal Law Sections 221.05, 221.10, 221.15
Q1 - Q4 2020

Race	Q1	Q1%	Q2	Q2%	Q3	Q3%	Q4	Q4%	Total	Total %
American Indian	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Asian/Pac Isl	2	1.52%	2	2.08%	0	0.00%	4	2.68%	8	1.83%
Black	74	56.06%	54	56.25%	41	68.33%	80	53.69%	249	56.98%
Hispanic	49	37.12%	33	34.38%	17	28.33%	57	38.26%	156	35.70%
Unknown	0	0.00%	1	1.04%	1	1.67%	2	1.34%	4	0.92%
White	7	5.30%	6	6.25%	1	1.67%	6	4.03%	20	4.58%
Grand Total	132	100.00%	96	100.00%	60	100.00%	149	100.00%	437	100.00%

Marijuana Criminal Court Summonses
Penal Law Sections 221.05
Q1 - Q4 2020

Race	Q1	Q1%	Q2	Q2%	Q3	Q3%	Q4	Q4%	Total	Total %
Native American/Alaskan	16	0.44%	25	0.97%	3	0.23%	5	0.17%	49	0.47%
Asian/Pac Isl	92	2.54%	0	0.00%	20	1.56%	32	1.10%	144	1.39%
Black	1957	54.02%	1535	59.70%	808	63.08%	1847	63.71%	6147	59.25%
Hispanic	1354	37.37%	887	34.50%	374	29.20%	899	31.01%	3514	33.87%
Unknown	47	1.30%	23	0.89%	18	1.41%	32	1.10%	120	1.16%
White	157	4.33%	101	3.93%	58	4.53%	82	2.83%	398	3.84%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	0.07%	2	0.02%
Grand Total	3623	100.00%	2571	100.00%	1281	100.00%	2899	100.00%	10374	100.00%

**Combined Marijuana Arrests and Criminal Court Summonses
Penal Law Sections 221.05, 221.10, 221.15
Q1 - Q4 2020**

Race	Q1	Q1%	Q2	Q2%	Q3	Q3%	Q4	Q4%	Total	Total %
Native American/Alaskan	16	0.43%	25	0.94%	3	0.22%	5	0.16%	49	0.45%
Asian/Pac Isl	94	2.50%	2	0.07%	20	1.49%	36	1.18%	152	1.41%
Black	2031	54.09%	1589	59.58%	849	63.31%	1927	63.22%	6396	59.16%
Hispanic	1403	37.36%	920	34.50%	391	29.16%	956	31.36%	3670	33.95%
Unknown	47	1.25%	24	0.90%	19	1.42%	34	1.12%	124	1.15%
White	164	4.37%	107	4.01%	59	4.40%	88	2.89%	418	3.87%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	0.07%	2	0.02%
Grand Total	3755	100.00%	2667	100.00%	1341	100.00%	3048	100.00%	10811	100.00%

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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. <https://www.legalaidnyc.org>