

THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Justice in Every Borough.

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

For Gun Violence Awareness Month, Legal Aid Releases Report Detailing Early Intervention and Community Engagement Work Around New York City

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society, to mark Gun Violence Awareness Month, released a [report](#) detailing the critical work of its Community Justice Unit (CJU) - a specialized unit that aims to combat gun violence, employing a holistic approach comprised of legal work, extensive community outreach including Know Your Rights trainings, and other grassroots, locally-based services to neighborhoods in need throughout New York City. CJU operates under the Cure Violence (CV) philosophy, which provides that violence can be curtailed with early intervention and community engagement.

From July 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021, Legal Aid's CJU:

- provided over 2,900 total services, including 1,475 services to Cure Violence partner organizations and 1,490 services to non-affiliated community members throughout NYC, as well as 61 staff members, 2,507 total community members, and 397 participants;
- served 263 program participants, including 13 Project HOPE and 250 [Project RESET](#) participants;
- hosted 24 community events, including but not limited to Know Your Rights trainings, legal clinics, Gun Awareness campaigns, Gang Database workshops, and other virtual events.

“Early intervention and community engagement is key to solving gun violence, not an increase in NYPD officers intruding further into already over-policed communities of color,” said **Anthony Posada, Supervising Attorney with the Community Justice Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. “During Gun Violence Awareness Month, we are proud to release this report to the public detailing our local work serving neighborhoods in need, and we encourage communities in search of these proven, community-based alternatives to contact us.”

CJU During COVID-19:

As with many organizations throughout New York City, the COVID-19 pandemic created new challenges and demands in the communities that CJU serves.

Over the last year, the need for immediate resources and services has increased, and in response, the CJU has adapted the delivery of its legal services to meet the needs of those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The CJU team created directories for emergency services covering immediate needs, including shelter and food, and longer term needs such as access to youth programming and a holistic self-care guide for incarcerated people. These resources were shared with the [Crisis Management System](#) (CMS), a network that deploys teams of credible messengers to mediate conflicts on the street and to connect high-risk individuals to services that can reduce the long-term risk of violence.

In addition, recognizing the urgency of remaining engaged across various communities, the CJU increased its use of remote technology to keep in contact with CMS sites, participants, and community members. Using tools such as Instagram Live and Zoom, the CJU continues to provide virtual Know Your Rights workshops, community forums, and legal intake sessions for community members who have specific legal issues, while maintaining support and providing clients with COVID-19 resources.

Neighborhoods CJU Serves:



CJU's Current Community Partners Include:

- RTG: Release the Grip North and South
- BIVO: Brownsville In Violence Out
- Save Our Streets (SOS) - operating in multiple locations
- True 2 Life sites - operating in multiple locations
- Street Corner Resources, Central Harlem
- S.A.V.E: Stand Against Violence East Harlem
- Wick
- B.R.A.G : Bronx Rises Against Gun Violence - operating in multiple locations

696 Build QueensBridge
Life Camp, Inc.
Man Up! Inc. - operating in multiple locations
Operation HOOD
Rock Safe Streets
GMACC: Gangstas Making Astronomical
Community Changes Inc. - operating in multiple locations

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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 145 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