



November 14, 2022

Contact:

Alejandra Lopez
Allopez@legal-aid.org
917-294-9348

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

***Legal Aid, Advocates and Elected Officials Call on NYPD
Inspector General to Release Audit of the NYPD's Gang
Database***

***G.A.N.G.S Coalition Also Urges the City Council to
Immediately Pass Legislation That Would Finally Abolish This
Overtly Racially Biased Policing Tool***

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society, [G.A.N.G.S Coalition](#), elected officials, impacted New Yorkers and others, rallied outside of the Office of the Inspector General for the NYPD ([OIG-NYPD](#)) to demand the release of a long-awaited report on the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) controversial gang database, and called on the New York City Council to pass [Int 0360](#), pending legislation that would abolish the database and precludes the NYPD from creating a replacement.

The New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), which oversees [OIG-NYPD](#), [stated](#) that the report would be released by the end of 2022. The report will reveal the findings of an audit that launched in 2018 into the problematic database, which is currently estimated to hold records on [17,500 to 42,000](#) New Yorkers, some as young as 13-years-old. [99 percent](#) of those in the database are Black and Latinx.

Advocates have long decried the NYPD gang database as discriminatory, over-inclusive, and full of erroneous data that results in surveillance and the [questionable](#) prosecution of Black and

Latinx people. Inclusion in a gang database, which requires no proof of criminal activity, can impact an individual's access to housing, education, employment, naturalization, and more.

“Simply put, the gang database is a racist and unconstitutional tool that ensnares young Black and Latinx New Yorkers in the criminal legal system, and we’re confident that the OIG-NYPD report will reflect exactly that,” said **Anthony Posada, supervising attorney in the Community Justice Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. “We call for the immediate release of this report, and on the City Council to advance much needed legislation that will abolish this rogue and hyper-inclusive database once and for all.”

In 2019, Chicago’s Office of Inspector General [audited](#) the Chicago Police Department’s Gang Database which resulted in findings of widespread abuse and discrimination. The report cited a lack of sufficient controls for generating, maintaining, and sharing gang-related data; a lack of procedural fairness protections; significant data quality concerns; and a lack of transparency regarding its gang designations strain on police-community relations.

Cities across the country, including [Chicago](#), [Boston](#), and [Washington D.C.](#), have successfully challenged their local law enforcement’s gang databases in court. The justices in the U.S. First Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston cited “flaws in that database, including its reliance on an erratic point system built on unsubstantiated inferences.”

In 2017, the Portland Police Bureau ended its gang database, yet a city [audit](#) less than a year later discovered that the Bureau still kept an informal list of active gang members despite purging the formal directory of “designated” gang members. This underscores the need for legislation, such as [Int 0360](#), to not only abolish databases, but also prohibit local law enforcement from creating replacements.

###

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 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