



Justice in Every Borough.

February 29, 2024

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

***Payouts on Alleged NYPD Misconduct Lawsuits for 2023 Reach Almost \$115 Million,
Second Highest Annual Payout Since 2018***

NYPD Misconduct Lawsuit Has Cost Taxpayers More Than \$540 Million Since 2018

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society released an [analysis](#) of [data](#) revealing that the City paid out [\\$114,586,723 million](#) in lawsuits alleging police misconduct for 2023, the second highest annual payout since 2018. Moreover, the median annual payout continues to steadily rise compared to prior years, reaching \$25,000 for 2023.

Since 2018, these lawsuits have cost taxpayers a staggering \$548,047,141.

Total payouts for police misconduct are likely to be substantially higher because these data do not account for matters that were settled with the New York City Comptroller’s office prior to formal litigation.

Calendar Year	Number of Disposed Lawsuits	Median payout \$	Total Payouts
2018	1579	\$10,500	\$76,492,742
2019	1283	\$17,500	\$71,918,243
2020	932	\$20,000	\$62,111,492
2021	755	\$20,000	\$87,556,727

2022	971	\$22,500	\$135,381,214
2023	801	\$25,000	\$114,586,723

“The staggering amount of money taxpayers have to foot each year to cover alleged NYPD misconduct truly shocks the conscience, and this should enrage all New Yorkers,” said **Jennvine Wong, Staff Attorney with the Cop Accountability Project at The Legal Aid Society**. “These payouts, which now total more than half a billion dollars since 2018, are indicative of a system that both refuses and fails to hold offending officers accountable. Rather than investing into public services and social safety nets, taxpayers are continually forced to cover the costs of violent policing.”

Case examples

[Jawaun Fraser v. City of New York et. al.](#)

Incident date: October 21, 2014

Settlement date: June 26, 2023

Payout: \$3,675,000.00

Jawaun Fraser spent two years wrongfully incarcerated based upon a robbery charge that a team of New York City narcotics police officers fabricated. To justify Fraser’s arrest, an undercover police officer and Detectives Matthew Regina and Jason Deltoro manufactured the false story that Fraser had robbed the undercover police officer of the latter’s driver’s license and \$20 in marked buy money and that Regina had found the undercover's identification on Fraser’s person when he was arrested. Damages also resulted from the failure of the police officers, and prosecutors, to disclose that members of the narcotics team who arrested Fraser had been sued for fabricating evidence and other constitutional violations at least 38 times. A New York State Supreme Court Justice overturned Fraser’s conviction on the basis that information had been wrongfully withheld from the defense, but not until he had endured the trauma of his prosecution, two years in state custody, and another year on strict parole supervision.

[Matthew Regina](#) was named as a defendant in four other lawsuits resulting in an additional \$55,501 in settlement payouts and was also the subject of at least thirteen civilian complaints filed with the CCRB.

[Jason Deltoro](#) was named in a 2018 lawsuit resulting in a \$60,000 settlement.

[Clarence Rouse v. City of New York et. al.](#)

Incident date: August 11, 2013

Settlement date: December 1, 2023

Payout: \$1,680,001.00

[Officer Christopher Lopez](#), in plainclothes and unmarked car, drew a gun on Clarence Rouse without identifying himself as a police officer and even though Rouse did not match the description for whom the officers were looking. Rouse began to run. Officers Christopher Lopez and Steven Lopez tackled Rouse, handcuffed him, beat

him, and pistol whipped him on his head to the point where later he needed staples on his skull from the harm inflicted. The officers generated a fictitious felony complaint against Rouse and claimed that a gun they recovered nearby belonged to him. They never dusted for prints nor conducted DNA testing. The officers testified dishonestly about seeing Rouse commit a crime. As a result, Rouse was convicted with the only evidence allegedly connecting Rouse to the crime were the fictitious allegations brought by the officers.

Christopher T. Lopez was named as a defendant in at least one other lawsuit resulting in an additional \$7,500 in settlement payouts and was also the subject of at least six civilian complaints filed with the CCRB.

[Steven O. Lopez](#) was named as a defendant in at least six previous lawsuits with total settlements resulting in an additional \$549,001 in settlement payouts and was also the subject of at least five CCRB civilian complaints filed with the CCRB.

[Crystal Castillo v. City of New York et. al.](#)

Incident date: May 31, 2020

Settlement date: June 12, 2023

Payout: \$962,500.00

[Hamze H. Elreda](#) and other officers used excessive force on plaintiffs, while other officers unlawfully failed to intervene in that use of excessive force. Elreda without provocation threatened to punch plaintiffs, stating he wanted to knock teeth out. Elreda ripped out hair extensions, swung his expandable baton violently, striking some plaintiffs, causing significant injuries, which required multiple stitches to the head. Pepper spray was also used on individuals by the officers. The defendants were subsequently unlawfully arrested and detained. Plaintiffs were maliciously prosecuted, until their cases were later resolved in their favor.

[Hamze H. Elreda](#) was named as a defendant in at least one other lawsuit resulting in an additional \$160,000 in settlement payouts on May 11, 2022, and was also the subject of at least two civilian complaints filed with the CCRB.

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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 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