

August 18, 2025

Contact:

Press@legal-aid.org

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

Statement on the NYPD's Citywide Expansion of the Quality of Life Teams

(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society** released the following statement on the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) citywide expansion of the Quality of Life teams:

"The Administration's misguided decision to expand 'Quality of Life' teams to all five boroughs is deeply troubling and dangerous. This expansion doubles down on the failed, punitive policies of the past that criminalize low-income New Yorkers — particularly people of color and youth, including immigrants — rather than providing real investment in housing, mental health care, and community resources. This type of enforcement doesn't make our city safer; it targets everyday New Yorkers struggling to survive in an increasingly unaffordable city and saddles them with the collateral consequences of an arrest record, impeding access to housing, education, and critical services.

"At a time when vulnerable immigrant New Yorkers already live under constant threat of detention and deportation, this expansion will only funnel more people into the criminal legal system for low-level offenses — like [jumping a turnstile](#). For immigrants, that \$2.90 could lead to detention, deportation, and permanent separation from their families, as such offenses can be considered crimes of moral turpitude and grounds for removal proceedings, and in some cases grounds for mandatory detention. It places them squarely in ICE's crosshairs, destabilizing communities, facilitating deportation, and deepening fear among those we represent.

"This is a deliberate policy choice that will harm the many communities we represent and undermines New York's purported ethos as a 'sanctuary city.' We urge City Hall to reverse course and invest in real, lasting solutions that meaningfully address the cycles of poverty so many of the people we serve grapple with."

Background:

The Quality of Life teams are being introduced as other specialized units — including the [Public Safety Teams](#), [Neighborhood Safety Teams](#), and [Community Response Teams](#) (CRTs) — face criticism. Most recently, CRTs were rightly [criticized](#) by the federal monitor overseeing stop-and-frisk reforms.

###

The Legal Aid Society is a nonprofit organization that exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For nearly 150 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