



February 4, 2025

Contact:

Audrey Martin
The Legal Aid Society
amartin@legal-aid.org

LDF Media Office
media@naacpldf.org

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

Legal Aid, Legal Defense Fund Condemn NYPD's Use of Controversial Neighborhood Safety Teams and Public Safety Teams for Repeated Instances of Unconstitutional, Racially Motivated Police Stops

Independent Monitor Report Shows Black or Hispanic Males Were 89% of Individuals Stopped By NST, PST Units in 2023

(NEW YORK, NY) - The Legal Aid Society and the Legal Defense Fund today condemned the New York City Police Department (NYPD) for their continued use of problematic Neighborhood Safety Teams (NST) and Public Safety Teams (PST), whose units deploy hundreds of officers across NYC's boroughs to patrol neighborhoods and conduct stops, frisks and searches, as well as make arrests, from unmarked vehicles.

According to a [report](#) released yesterday by the NYPD's Court-appointed Independent Monitor, the units engage in elevated rates of unconstitutional police stops and racially disparate policing. In 2023, Black or Hispanic males made up a staggering 89% of the individuals stopped by NST and PST officers.

This report serves as a follow-up to a 2023 report filed by the Monitor, which concluded that NST officers performed below constitutional standards by having a higher percentage of unlawful *Terry* stops – defined as an officer temporarily detaining an individual, who does not feel free to leave – than officers conducting regular patrols. The latest report expands on the original report and compares NST officers with their counterparts on regular patrol and in PSTs.

The report found that NST officers had reasonable suspicion for only 75% of the reported *Terry* stops, 17 percentage points lower than their patrol counterparts' rate of 92%. PST officers also made unlawful stops at a rate higher than patrol officers, with only 64% of their reported stops being assessed as lawful.

The overwhelming majority of *Terry* stops conducted by NST and PST officers were self-initiated – 70% and 77%, respectively. In addition, only 58% of frisks and 54% searches by NST officers appeared to be lawful in the Monitor's assessment.

Supervisory oversight of NST units also continues to be woefully inadequate, with command-level supervisors determining that only 1% of stops and 1% of frisks and searches were unlawful, despite independent data showing otherwise.

“The racially motivated policing that NST and PST officers routinely engage in has resulted in staggeringly high rates of constitutional violations that disproportionately impact New Yorkers of color,” **said Karina Tefft, Staff Attorney in the Cop Accountability Project at The Legal Aid Society.** “The Independent Monitor's data is clear: these units are responsible for reprehensible levels of discriminatory policing yet face little to no consequences for their actions. The only way to mitigate the levels of harm NST and PST units have had on communities of color is for the NYPD to put an immediate end to their deployment. In their absence, the City must dedicate resources toward programs and initiatives that truly invest in the long-term wellbeing of these communities.”

“The Independent Monitor's report makes clear that the NYPD continues to deploy specialized units that harm and harass Black communities. For years, these units have engaged in racially biased policing while evading accountability,” **said Charles McLaurin, Senior Counsel at the Legal Defense Fund.** “The NYPD cannot continue to resurrect specialized units by simply giving them different names but with the same powers and tactics that have resulted in a long history of unconstitutional police conduct. Instead, we need investments in intervention programs that increase public safety and respect all communities without undue reliance on law enforcement.”

The Legal Aid Society and the Legal Defense Fund represent a class of plaintiffs who sued the NYPD for abusive stop and frisk and trespass arrests in NYC public housing residences, in one of the three consolidated cases that led to the appointment of the NYPD Monitor and the publication of this report. Selendy Gay PLLC has been participating in the case as pro bono counsel.

###

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 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. <https://legalaidnyc.org/>

Founded in 1940, the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) is the nation's first civil rights law organization. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multidisciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.