

# REFORM NYPD NOW COALITION

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## MEDIA CONTACTS:

David Nocenti – (212) 828-6046; [dnocenti@unionsettlement.org](mailto:dnocenti@unionsettlement.org)

Cheryl Dudley – (212) 870-3115; [cdudley@abcmny.org](mailto:cdudley@abcmny.org)

Damyn Kelley – (212) 870-8111; [dkelly@lssny.org](mailto:dkelly@lssny.org)

Elisa Istueta – (929) 533-8315; [eistueta@dfoy.org](mailto:eistueta@dfoy.org)

Gretchen Buchenholz – (917) 439-7302; [gbuchenholz@a-b-c.org](mailto:gbuchenholz@a-b-c.org)

Trish Anderton – (929) 249-1449; [tanderton@goddard.org](mailto:tanderton@goddard.org)

## BROAD COALITION OF OVER 50 NONPROFITS CALLS FOR URGENT AND FUNDAMENTAL REFORMS TO THE NYPD

*Effort focuses on changes to NYPD policies and practices that can be adopted immediately*

*Supporters include a wide array of organizations representing virtually every sector of the New York City nonprofit community*

Over 50 nonprofit organizations – including social justice and advocacy organizations, religious congregations, and nonprofits providing vital education, health, housing, youth development, and other social services in low-income communities of color – today sent a [letter](#) to Mayor Bill de Blasio, Police Commissioner Dermot Shea and all members of the New York City Council, calling for the immediate implementation of necessary changes to NYPD policies and practices.

The REFORM NYPD NOW [agenda](#) includes recommendations from a wide variety of advocates, and focuses on vital reforms for which there is a broad consensus and that can be adopted immediately. The reforms seek to reduce incidents of police officer misconduct, improve the training of police officers, and enhance accountability for officers involved in misconduct. For example, the agenda includes:

- Adopting the “8 Can’t Wait” reforms – which include requiring officers to de-escalate situations before using force, report all uses of force, give verbal warnings where possible before using deadly force, and intervene when they see other officers engaging in misconduct – which are being advocated for nationally and have already been adopted by the police departments in Boston, San Francisco, Tucson and elsewhere;
- Strengthening the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB), including providing the CCRB with the authority to impose discipline on officers when its investigations have resulted in findings of misconduct;
- Making footage from body-worn cameras immediately available to the public;
- Prohibiting the hiring of officers with a history of excessive force or serious substantiated misconduct complaints; and
- Requiring annual training for all officers in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), community relations, de-escalation strategies, and preventing discriminatory profiling.

In addition, the REFORM NYPD NOW agenda calls on the Mayor and the Police Commissioner to publicly acknowledge and apologize for NYPD's history of disparate treatment of persons of color, and to pledge to institute the proposed reforms.

The [letter](#) asks the Mayor, Police Commissioner and members of the City Council to indicate by September 9 whether they support each of the items in the REFORM NYPD NOW [agenda](#), and the specific steps they will take to implement those reforms.

While strongly condemning racist police practices, the organizations signing the letter explicitly reject efforts to condemn all police officers. Indeed, the vast majority of these organizations are embedded in communities of color and often work side by side with dedicated officers seeking to partner with community-based organizations and local residents to keep their neighborhoods safe.

Moreover, the signers also make clear that the REFORM NYPD NOW agenda is just one component within a broader array of systemic reforms required to eliminate racial and ethnic inequities in criminal justice, housing, education, health, mental health, employment and other areas.

“Union Settlement has been working for over a century to address the needs of the low-income residents here in East Harlem, and one of our most urgent priorities right now is ending the NYPD’s disparate treatment of all communities of color,” said **David Nocenti**, Executive Director of **Union Settlement**. “I am proud to be part of this amazing coalition of nonprofits supporting the REFORM NYPD NOW agenda, which seek to improve training, reduce instance of police misconduct, and enhance accountability measures for officers who abuse the public trust.”

“Nonprofits working in low income and under resourced communities know how important it is to have a collaborative and trusting relationship between the NYPD and local residents,” said **Damyn Kelly, PhD**, President and CEO of **Lutheran Social Services of New York**. “Unfortunately, the trust between the NYPD and the community has been strained and it must be strengthened for both the health and safety of the community. Adoption of the REFORM NYPD NOW agenda will be a major step in that direction.”

“We have to fix policing and make it a profession and service that community members support, not just use,” said **Christopher Watler**, Chief External Affairs Officer for the **Center for Employment Opportunities**. “The murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks, Ahmaud Arbery and so many others have shined a brighter light on long-existing issues and demand that we urgently reform policing and our justice system. To protect Black Lives we must end mass incarceration, invest resources in community based prevention and reentry programs and provide equitable access to economic opportunities for people leaving incarceration.”

“We value the police and the vital role they play in communities,” said **Roderick L. Jones**, Executive Director of **Goddard Riverside**. “We need metered approaches to ensure they are effective and refrain from actions that betray the trust of black, brown and other members of the public.”

“ABCMNy stands with NY civic and faith organizations calling for reform within the NYPD,” said **Rev. Dr. Cheryl F. Dudley**, Regional Executive Minister of the **American Baptist Churches of Metropolitan New York**. “Toward the dignity of New Yorkers, particularly, black, brown & LGBTQ residents, regularly targeted by police officers, and subject to emotional and bodily harm and death, we rebuke racist police systems that protect racially motivated acts by the police. Jaundiced, corrupt or ill-prepared officers have too often harmed our citizens, residents and visitors. We call on the Mayor and Police Commissioner to actively work to repair the historic and continuing mistreatment of persons at the

hands of the police, and build community trust to assure us that the police will protect and serve those in real danger in the various communities in the City.”

“Since 1986, Association to Benefit Children has endeavored to build trust between the children of East Harlem and the police,” said **Gretchen Buchenholz**, Founder and Executive Director of **Association to Benefit Children**. “In all our classrooms our littlest ones learn about the police, not as a hostile armed and dangerous force, but as our public servants and “community helpers,” whom children might aspire to be. The police need to learn immediately that their job is to know us and serve our community, to be “Someone to Watch Over Us.” Thus, healing through REFORM NYPD NOW is urgent.”

“Young Audiences New York stands in solidarity with communities of color in calling for the reform of discriminatory police practices and the end of systemic racism,” said **Diana Breen**, Interim President and CEO of **Young Audiences New York**. “The young people we serve are counting on Mayor de Blasio and the NYPD to act on the side of justice.”

“I strongly support the REFORM NYPD NOW agenda because it includes a broad array of reforms aimed at reducing police misconduct, and increasing accountability when misconduct does occur,” said **Judy Zangwill**, Executive Director of **Sunnyside Community Services**. “I also strongly support longer-term structural changes – including reducing the NYPD’s budget and using those funds to increase services in low-income communities with a focus on prevention – and am proud to be part of both efforts.”

“As a community coalition of East Harlem health care providers with a decades-long commitment and mission of eliminating health disparities, the East Harlem Community Health Committee recognizes the monumental negative effect on the health of our community residents caused by police officer misconduct and lack of training and the resulting lasting effects of the trauma inflicted on our community,” said **Erika Donovan Estades**, Board Member of the **East Harlem Community Health Committee**. “The American Public Health Association has identified law enforcement violence as a public health issue, and we support the proposed structural changes.”

“We will not stop talking until a trusting and collaborative relationship between the NYPD and local residents is established, with the adoption of the REFORM NYPD NOW agenda,” said **Charles Sincero Chenet**, Executive Director of **Dare2Draw**. “The dialogue has developed and there’s no going back.”

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