

August 25, 2020

Hon. Bill de Blasio  
Mayor  
City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Corey Johnson  
Speaker  
New York City Council  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dermot Shea  
Commissioner  
New York City Police Department  
One Police Plaza  
New York, NY 10038

All NYC Council Members  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Johnson, Commissioner Shea and NYC Council Members:

The undersigned non-profit social service and social justice organizations represent and serve low-income communities of color throughout New York City. For years, we have both personally witnessed, and advocated against, the disparities in treatment of residents of communities of color by members of the New York City Police Department.

Over the past several months, the outrage that we have always felt has now spread throughout New York City, as amply shown by the many peaceful street demonstrations that have occurred. While we are saddened that it has taken the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Rayshard Brooks and others to bring the issue of racist and unjust policing to the forefront, we are also inspired by having so many New Yorkers joining us in calling for an end to these practices.

We acknowledge that a few small steps have been taken on this issue – such as opening up police disciplinary records, banning chokeholds and affirming the public’s right to record police activity – but these minimal changes were long overdue, and will do little to change what is occurring every day in our communities.

Here is the reality: Substantial systemic changes are needed, and they are needed now.

Attached is the REFORM NYPD NOW agenda, which is a list of reforms that must be taken right away. **We are asking each of you to publicly state your position on these reforms, as well as the steps you intend to take to implement the reforms that you support.**

The REFORM NYPD NOW agenda starts with an acknowledgement of the NYPD’s history of mistreatment of communities of color, and a pledge to institute the changes needed to end that practice. There can be no reform if that past history of discriminatory treatment continues to be denied.

The agenda also proposes changes along a broad spectrum of areas – from police officer hiring and training practices, to how officers interact with the public, to the process for disciplining officers who engage in misconduct, and much more.

The listed reforms are not new, and they are not hard. Together, they will set the stage for fundamentally improving the relationship between the NYPD and the communities it serves. All that is needed is the will of our government leaders to adopt these reforms.

Two important points:

First, the REFORM NYPD NOW agenda does not purport to be a solution to the problem of the disparate treatment of communities of color. Instead, it focuses solely on the most urgently needed changes to NYPD policing structures, tactics and policies, and is just one component within a broader array of systemic reforms required to eliminate racial and ethnic inequities in housing, education, health care, employment, law enforcement and other areas. Nor does the package take a position on the appropriate amount of funding for the NYPD budget.

Second, while we strongly condemn racist policing, past and present, we do not condemn all police officers, individually or collectively. To the contrary, because our organizations are embedded in communities of color, we understand well the important role that police officers play in helping to keep our neighborhoods safe, and we often work side by side with dedicated officers of all races, ethnicities, religions and genders to achieve that goal.

But the hard work and good intentions of these dedicated officers has been completely undermined by the actions of officers who mistreat people of color, resulting in the deep chasm of distrust that now exists.

Bridging that chasm is the most important and urgent task that we face, and it starts with implementing the proposed reforms.

**We are asking each of you, by Wednesday, September 9, 2020, to: (1) publicly state whether you support or oppose each of the items in the REFORM NYPD NOW agenda; and (2) set forth the specific steps that you will take to implement those reforms, including your timetable for doing so.** Please provide your response by emailing David Nocenti, Executive Director of Union Settlement, at [dnocenti@unionsettlement.org](mailto:dnocenti@unionsettlement.org).

We hope that you will join us in this cause, and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Cheryl F. Dudley  
Regional Executive Minister  
American Baptist Churches of Metropolitan  
New York

Stephen Tosh  
Executive Director  
Boys' Club of New York

Therese R. Rodriguez  
Chief Executive Officer  
Apicha Community Health Center

Muzzy Rosenblatt  
CEO and President  
BRC

Gretchen Buchenholz  
Founder and Executive Director  
Association to Benefit Children

Ellen Baxter  
Executive Director  
Broadway Housing Communities

Bishop Carlton T. Brown  
Senior Pastor & Chairman  
Bethel Gospel Assembly, Inc.

Christopher Watler  
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President and CEO  
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Children of Promise, NYC

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Rose Duhan  
President and CEO  
Community Health Care Association of NYS

Robert Hayes  
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Elisa Istueta  
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Directions For Our Youth

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East Harlem Community Health Committee

Jeff Ginsburg  
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Celia Ramirez  
President  
East River North Renewal HDFC

Alan van Capelle  
President and CEO  
Educational Alliance

Julio Medina  
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Exodus Transitional Community

William Weisberg  
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Forestdale

JoAnne Page  
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The Fortune Society

Dr. Jocelyne Rainey  
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Getting Out and Staying Out/  
Stand Against Violence East Harlem

Roderick Jones  
Executive Director  
Goddard Riverside

Michelle Yanche  
Executive Director  
Good Shepherd Services

Robert Cordero  
Executive Director  
Grand Street Settlement

Natalie Martinez  
Director of Youth Employment Programs  
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Chris Norwood  
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Health People

Walter Roberts  
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Hope Community

Ken Jockers  
Executive Director  
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Christopher Hanway  
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Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement

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Margaret Della  
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Kingsbridge Heights Community Center

Reada Edelstein  
Chief Executive Officer  
LSA Family Health Service

Damyn Kelly, J.D.; PhD  
President and CEO  
Lutheran Social Services of NY

Fred Riccardi  
President  
Medicare Rights Center

Rev. Dr. Alfreda Griffin-Johnson  
Outreach Minister  
Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal  
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Ben Thomases  
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Queens Community House

Rachel Cytron  
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Row New York

Lucy Herz  
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Student Success Network

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Gregory J. Morris  
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Lakythia Ferby  
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STRIVE New York

David Nocenti  
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Kimberly Williams  
President and CEO  
Vibrant Emotional Health

Christine Quinn  
President and CEO  
Women In Need (Win)

Sharon Greenberger  
President & CEO  
YMCA of Greater New York

Diana Breen  
Interim President and CEO  
Young Audiences New York

Robert T. Taylor  
Executive Director  
Youth Action Programs and Homes

cc: Attorney General Letitia James  
NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer  
NYC Public Advocate Jumaane Williams  
Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark  
Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez  
Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance, Jr.  
Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz  
Staten Island District Attorney Michael E. McMahon

August 25, 2020

## **REFORM NYPD NOW AGENDA**

Set forth below is a list of recommended actions that must be taken immediately to help address current deficiencies in the way that the NYPD treats communities of color.

### **A. Pledge to Reform**

1. The Mayor and Police Commissioner should: (1) publicly acknowledge and apologize for NYPD's history of disparate treatment of persons of color; and (2) pledge to institute systemic reforms, including those noted below.

### **B. Reduce Police Officer Misconduct and Excessive Use of Force**

1. Update all use-of-force policies to clearly set forth the maximum use of force allowable in response to specific types of conduct (\*)
2. Require officers to de-escalate situations to the greatest extent possible before using force (\*)(†)
3. Require police officers to exhaust all other reasonable alternatives before resorting to deadly force (\*)(†)
4. Require officers to give a clear verbal warning, when possible, and give people a reasonable amount of time to comply with the warning before using deadly force (\*)
5. Prohibit shooting at a moving vehicle, unless threatened with deadly force other than the vehicle (\*)
6. Require officers to provide comprehensive reporting of all uses of force and threats of use of force (\*)
7. Establish a "duty to intervene" for all police officers witnessing misconduct by another police officer, including but not limited to excessive use of force (\*)(†)
8. Provide whistleblower protections for officers who report misconduct by another officer (†)

### **C. Strengthen the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB)**

1. Eliminate Police Commissioner review of CCRB recommended sanctions, thereby providing the CCRB with final disciplinary authority in the cases it investigates (†)
2. Expand the CCRB's jurisdiction to include: (1) allegations of biased policing and racial profiling; and (2) allegations against non-uniformed NYPD employees (†)
3. Codify the CCRB Administrative Prosecution Unit (APU), which now exists only pursuant to an MOU among the CCRB, NYPD and City Hall.
4. Fully fund CCRB's current operations, and any expanded duties granted to the CCRB

#### **D. Enhance Police Officer Qualifications and Training**

1. Create a statewide board with authority to certify all police officers, and to revoke an officer's certification for misconduct, which would prevent the officer from simply being hired by another jurisdiction (†)
2. Prohibit the hiring of officers with a history of excessive force or serious substantiated misconduct complaints
3. Implement mandatory annual training for all officers in the following areas:
  - a. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)
  - b. Community relations, including effective youth engagement strategies
  - c. De-escalation and violence reduction strategies
  - d. Preventing racial, ethnic, religious and discriminatory profiling
4. Prohibit deployment of officers to any precinct prior to their completion of community relations training
5. Require officers deployed to any precinct to participate in an introductory two-week period focused on engagement with the community being served, including meetings with tenant associations, community groups, nonprofits, schools, business associations, youth and others

*Note: CBOs must be involved in the design and implementation of the above trainings*

#### **E. Other Reforms**

1. Make footage from body-worn cameras immediately publicly available (†)
2. Require that any NYPD rules governing interactions with the public, including those impacting arrests and use of force, follow the NYC Administrative Procedures Act process of public notice and comment (†)

*Items marked with an asterisk (\*) are part of the "8 Can't Wait" agenda, which has been adopted by multiple police departments throughout the country, including those in San Francisco, Boston and Tucson. The "8 Can't Wait" agenda also includes a ban on chokeholds, which has already been enacted into law by New York City.*

*Items marked with an obelisk (†) are part of the reform agenda recommended by New York State Attorney General Letitia James*

*Note: The above NYPD reform agenda does not purport to be a comprehensive list of all actions that are needed, and instead intentionally focuses solely on essential immediate reforms to NYPD policing structures, tactics and policies. These improvements are just one component within a broader array of systemic reforms required to eliminate racial and ethnic inequities in housing, education, health care, employment, law enforcement and other areas. Finally, these reform proposals do not take a position on what amount of funding is appropriate for the NYPD.*