

# Trends in Criminal Summons Issuance, Outcomes, and Racial Disparities, 2023-2024

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Updating a comprehensive [Data Collaborative for Justice report](#) on New York City’s criminal summons practices from 2013 to 2022,<sup>1</sup> this research brief continues to document greater reliance on summonses for minor “quality-of-life” offenses since reaching a low watermark in 2021. This brief also continues to find that the criminal courts ultimately dismiss the vast majority of summons cases.

The elevated use of summonses ostensibly cuts against the goals of the landmark [Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan](#), developed by the administration of former Mayor Bill de Blasio and approved by the City Council in March of 2021.<sup>2</sup> This plan explicitly sought to reduce the overenforcement of minor misconduct and, in turn, to mitigate historically disproportionate impacts on low-income New Yorkers and communities of color.

Extending the tracking period through 2023 and 2024, the current brief highlights trends in criminal summonses issued by the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and docketed by the criminal courts, their top charges, and related racial and socioeconomic disparities.

## What is a Criminal Summons?

In New York City, law enforcement may issue a **criminal summons** for certain low-level offenses that do not automatically require fingerprinting or arrest. Criminal summonses may include misdemeanors, violations, or infractions. The person receiving the summons generally must appear in person at the indicated criminal court or community court on or up to a week before the date and time listed on the ticket. People who plead guilty or are convicted at trial may be sentenced to pay a fine, fee, and/or surcharge; ordered to community service; or incarcerated in jail. If the person fails to appear by their assigned court date, an arrest warrant is issued to secure their return.

By contrast, a **civil summons** is, by definition, a *non-criminal matter* that is not heard in the criminal courts and cannot result in criminal penalties. Civil summonses are handled by the NYC Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH). People may pay a fine online or attend a hearing, where they may contest the summons or, if admitting to it, receive the choice of paying a fine or performing community service. *Warrants or jail time cannot be imposed.*

Depending on the alleged offense, law enforcement may issue only a criminal summons, only a civil summons, or either one at their discretion (subject to guidance from the [NYPD Patrol Guide](#)).<sup>3</sup> Therefore, there are not exclusively bifurcated lists of low-level offenses falling into each category. But once law enforcement issues one and not the other type, it affects whether the criminal or civil justice systems will process the matter. For additional background, see the Data Collaborative for Justice’s previous reports on [criminal summonses](#) and [civil summons](#).<sup>4</sup>

### About the Data

Data was obtained from the New York State Office of Court Administration (OCA). Prior to docketing, the court throws out certain summonses considered “defective” for reasons such as not indicating the date or time of the required court appearance or indicating an invalid date that falls on a weekend or holiday. The court then attempts to notify the individual by mail that there is no need to appear, as the matter is resolved.

Defective summonses are *included* in Exhibits 1-4 and then omitted from the remainder of the report to focus on the cases of people scheduled to appear in court and potentially exposed to warrants or other criminal penalties.

The current analysis also omitted summonses issued by New York City agencies other than the NYPD and, given this brief’s interest in examining disproportionate enforcement against individuals, omitted summonses issued to businesses.

**Data Qualification:** [Public NYPD summons data](#) used in a separate Data Collaborative for Justice [report](#) yielded comparable trendlines to those presented below, but higher overall summons totals,<sup>5</sup> a reflection of unknown differences with the current report’s court-based data source and case omissions noted above. *Importantly, court data relied on for the current brief offers the advantages of separating out defective summonses and including information about how the City’s criminal courts resolved the docketed cases.*

### Findings

#### CRIMINAL SUMMONSES ISSUED FROM 2013 TO 2024

*First, we examined all summonses issued by the NYPD and submitted to the courts, including both those docketed and scheduled for appearance and those thrown out as “defective.”*

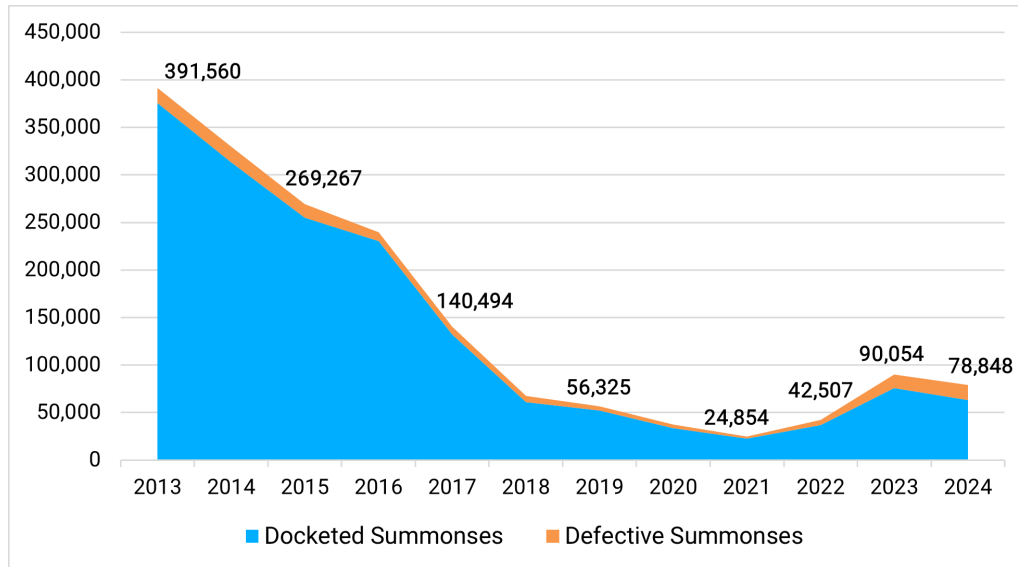
- **Summons volume spiked in 2023, before receding in 2024:** The NYPD issued **90,054** summonses in 2023, representing more than double the 2022 number and over three and a half times the 2021 number. Then in 2024, summonses declined by **12%** to **78,848 (Exhibit 1)**. While the 2024 number was still more than three times higher than the low of **24,854** in 2021, a closer examination of the monthly numbers indicates that summonses peaked in the summer of 2023 before falling by **more than 50%** over the following 18 months (**Exhibit 2**).
- **Despite recent increases, summons volume remained far lower than a decade ago:** For context, even in the recent peak year of 2023, NYPD issued **only 23%** of the **391,560** criminal summonses handled a decade earlier in 2013 (**Exhibit 1**).
- **Defective summonses skyrocketed from 2013 to 2024:** The proportion of summonses NYPD submitted to the criminal courts that the courts deemed defective and threw out before docketing increased from **4%** in 2013 to **20%** in 2024, with most of this increase taking place since 2021 (**Exhibit 3**). *In absolute numbers, the courts threw out **15,908** summonses before docketing in 2024.*

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- **Defective summons reasons shifted in 2024:** Prior to 2024, the most common reason for summonses to be found defective prior to docketing was for being submitted late to the court. This was likely due to a legislative change in 2020 that required summonses be sent to court within 20 days.<sup>6</sup> However, in 2024, the reason, “original summons not being on file” (where police officers provide the court with an incorrect version of the summons form) accounted for **26%** of defective summonses, a **15 percentage-point** increase compared to prior years (**Exhibit 4**).<sup>7</sup>

### EXHIBIT 1.

#### Total NYPD Summonses Issued, 2013-2024



### EXHIBIT 2.

#### Monthly Criminal Summonses, 2022-2024

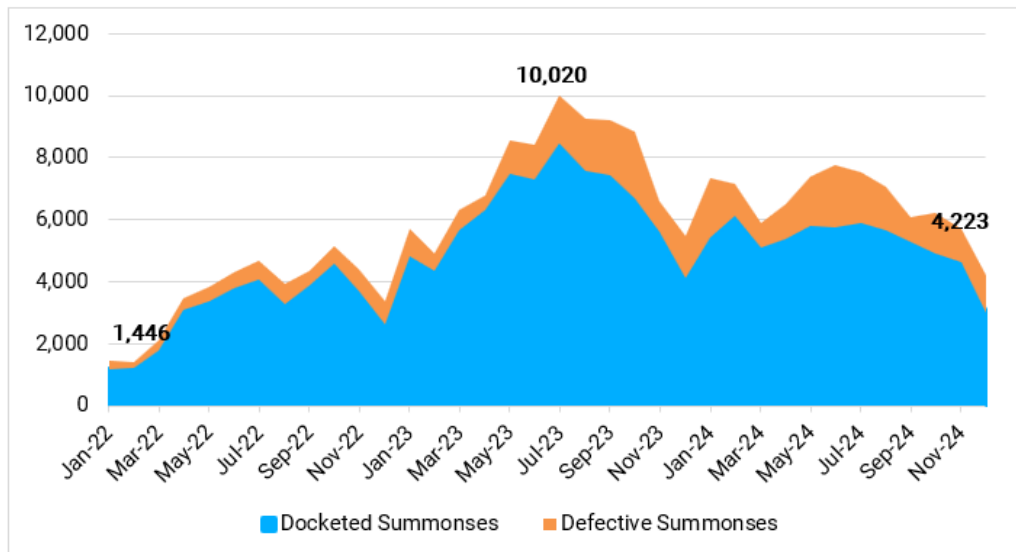


EXHIBIT 3.  
Proportion of Defective Summonses 2013-2024

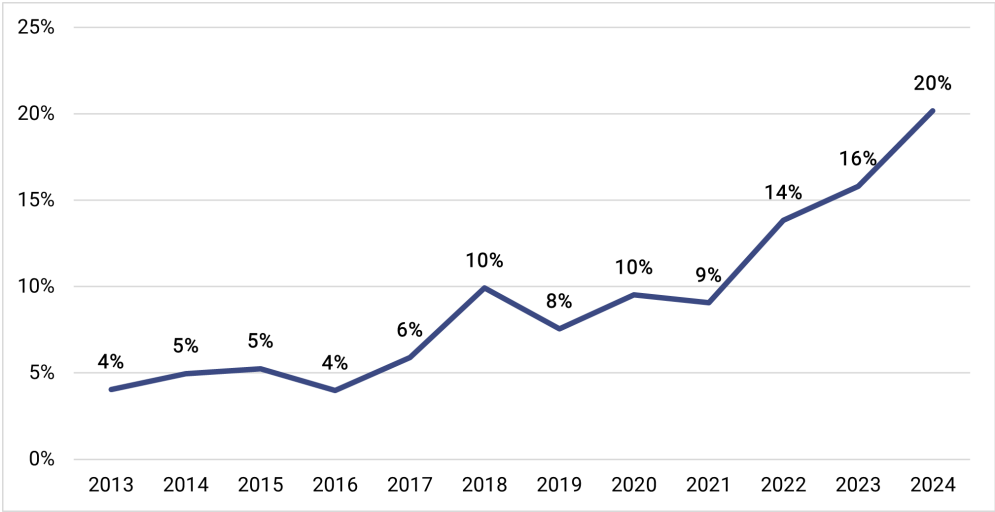
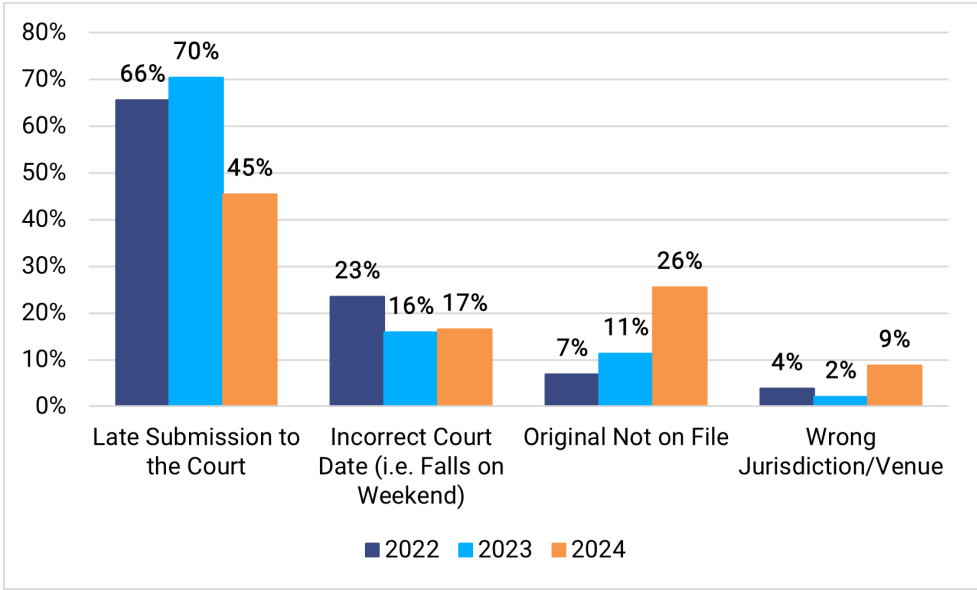


EXHIBIT 4.  
Reasons for Defective Summons



### ANALYSIS OF DOCKETED CRIMINAL SUMMONSES

*The remainder of this brief solely analyzes docketed summonses scheduled for arraignment, generally requiring a trip to court, and including the possibility of criminal penalties.*

#### Borough Breakdown

- **The Brooklyn Criminal Court continued to process the most summonses:** Brooklyn accounted for **over 35%** of docketed summonses in both 2023 and 2024. In 2024, Brooklyn and Manhattan combined for **67%** of all New York City summonses (**Exhibit 5**).
- **Since 2019, Manhattan saw the largest summons increase:** Four of the five boroughs saw a decline in their docketed summons numbers from 2023 to 2024, apart from Manhattan, whose summons numbers grew by **31%**. In turn, Manhattan's share of the citywide total jumped from **20%** (**15,507**) in 2023 to **32%** (**20,347**) in 2024. (**Exhibit 5**).

#### Summons Charges

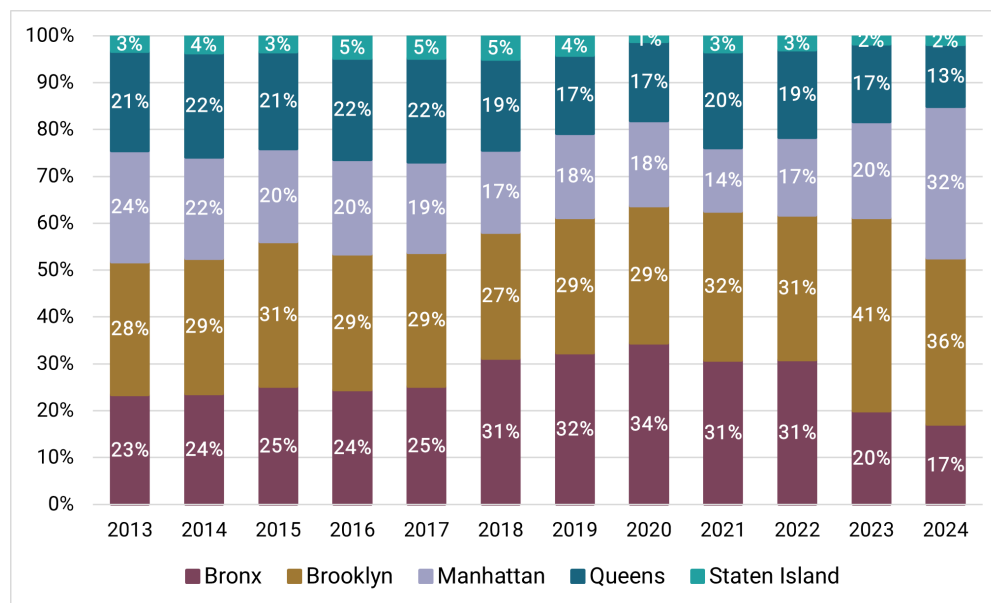
- **Enforcement of Vehicle and Traffic law charges recently increased:** There was a clear shift in enforcement priorities in 2024, with **17%** of all summonses issued for Vehicle and Traffic Law charges, up from **8%** in 2019; specifically, **30%** of the Vehicle and Traffic Law summonses in 2024 were for a suspended registration. Disorderly conduct was the next most common summons charge in 2024, also at **17%** and up only modestly from **13%** in 2019 (**Exhibit 6**).
- **Criminal enforcement of CJRA eligible offenses increased sharply from 2021 to 2023, before receding in 2024:**
  - **Background:** Put into effect in 2017, the Criminal Justice Reform Act (CJRA) *allowed*, but did not *require*, the NYPD to issue a civil summons in lieu of a criminal summons for five types of offenses: (1) Public consumption/open container of alcohol; (2) Public urination; (3) Littering; (4) Noise; and (5) Parks offenses.<sup>8</sup> [Prior research](#) found that in its first year after the June 13, 2017 effective date, docketed criminal summonses for these offenses declined by **94%**.<sup>9</sup>
  - **Increased criminal summonses for CJRA eligible offenses from 2021 to 2023:** From 2021 to 2023, criminal summonses for an open container of alcohol increased by **924%** (from **2,010** to **20,595**) and accounted for **27%** of the 2023 total (**Exhibit 6**). In general, the data from 2021 to 2023 points to increased criminal enforcement of CJRA eligible offenses (**Exhibit 7**). From 2018 to 2021, CJRA eligible offenses ranged narrowly from **8%** to **12%** of all criminal summonses. This percentage then increased significantly, peaking at **37%** of total docketed summonses issued in 2023, a year when **27,884** criminal summonses involved a CJRA offense, despite the legal option to issue a civil summons.
  - **Declining criminal summonses for CJRA offenses in 2024:** In a reversal, CJRA offenses then declined sharply to **14%** of the criminal summons total in 2024, with open container summonses plummeting from **27%** of the 2023 total to **9%** of the 2024 total.

## Summons Outcomes

- **Barely any criminal summonses ended in conviction:** In 2024, **9%** of docketed criminal summonses ended in a conviction. Another **22%** were resolved with an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal (virtually always culminating months later in an actual dismissal), and **69%** received a straight dismissal at the court appearance.<sup>10</sup> Since 2019, criminal convictions were rare, ranging from just **4%** to **13%** of outcomes for docketed criminal summons (**Exhibit 8**).
- **Since 2022, dismissals for legal insufficiency, a subset of all dismissals, made up the largest fraction of case dispositions:** In 2024, **45%** of all docketed summons dispositions involved a *dismissal for legal insufficiency*, including such reasons as illegible handwriting or an incorrect penal code (**Exhibit 8**). The recent increase in legally insufficient summonses from **35%** in 2019 to a low of **28%** in 2021 and then back up to **45%** in 2024 suggests a possible emphasis on the *quantity* of summonses issued over *accuracy*.
- **Bottom Line: When including all summonses issued by the NYPD (including both docketed and defective), most of them are now thrown out due to submission errors:** In 2024, **over 65%** of all summonses the NYPD issued were found facially insufficient through one of two mechanisms, whether found “defective” prior to docketing (see above) or ruled legally insufficient by the judge at the arraignment court appearance. Since 2019, this figure never fell under **41%**, though 2024 was the first year it exceeded half. *With a 2024 conviction rate below 10% and a facial insufficiency rate above 65%, the issuance of summonses largely has a “process as punishment” effect for people facing charges,<sup>11</sup> who experience the issuance of the summons, threat of penalties, and likely requirement to attend court, while rarely leading to criminal penalties.*

### EXHIBIT 5.

**Docketed Criminal Summonses by Borough, 2013-2024**



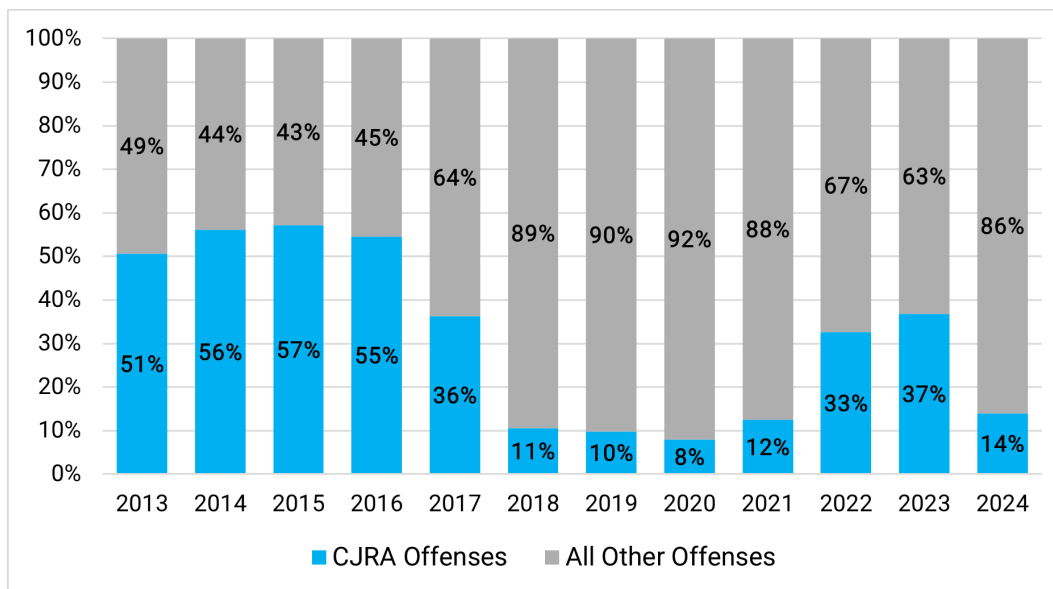
## EXHIBIT 6.

### Top Summons Charges, 2019-2024

Charge Type	2019		2020-2022		2023		2024	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Vehicle & Traffic Charges	4,150	8%	5,751	6%	8,220	11%	10,944	17%
Disorderly Conduct	6,631	13%	12,846	14%	8,694	11%	10,500	17%
Open Container of Alcohol	3,515	7%	12,719	14%	20,595	27%	5,449	9%
Transit Authority Charges	3,338	6%	4,491	5%	3,485	5%	5,087	8%
Reckless Driving	1,435	3%	4,075	4%	4,546	6%	4,684	7%
Trespassing	2,113	4%	4,104	4%	3,202	4%	2,134	3%
Public Urination	757	1%	2,417	3%	4,075	5%	1,654	3%
Other Penal Law Charges	1,381	3%	2,223	2%	1,702	2%	2,112	3%
Other Administrative Code Charges	4,515	9%	8,964	10%	8,396	11%	9,281	15%
All Other Charges	24,238	47%	35,284	38%	12,904	17%	11,095	18%

## EXHIBIT 7.

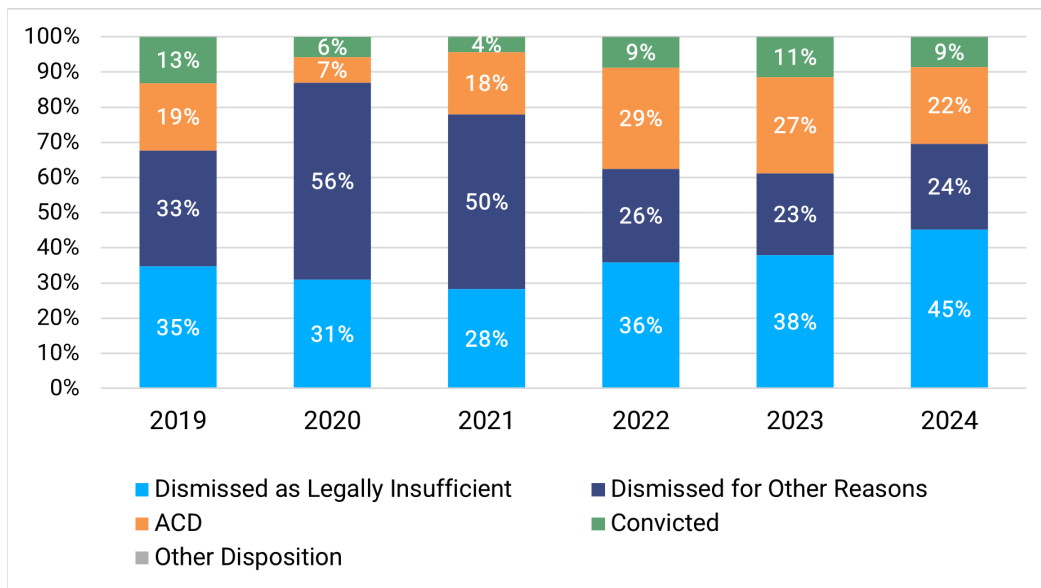
### Proportion of CJRA Eligible Summonses Issued, 2013-2024





### EXHIBIT 8.

#### Disposition Outcomes 2019-2024



Note: 'Other Disposition' = <1% of total dispositions for each year.

### Racial Disparities

- **Across all years, the NYPD issued most docketed summonses to Black and Hispanic New Yorkers:** Racial disparities in summons issuance continued, with **84%** of docketed summonses in 2023 and **78%** in 2024 issued to Black and Hispanic people, despite their accounting for only a combined **51%** of the City's general population (**Exhibit 9**).
- **Racial disparities declined since 2021:** Notwithstanding continued disproportionate issuance, the magnitude of racial disparities *declined* since 2021 (**Exhibit 10.a**). Black residents were issued criminal summonses at a rate **6.2** times higher than white people in 2024, a decline from **11.7** times higher in 2021. Hispanic residents were issued summonses at a rate **4.0** times higher than white residents in 2024, declining from **6.1** times higher in 2021.
- **Queens, however, showed a stark increase in Hispanic-white disparities:** Summons rates and trends varied widely by borough. Despite a citywide decline in racial disparities, Queens saw a sharp increase, with Hispanic residents receiving summonses at a rate **11.4** times higher than white residents in 2024, compared to **5.5** times higher in 2021 (**Exhibit 10.e**). Meanwhile, Manhattan was the only borough that saw a decline in racial disparities for both Black and Hispanic New Yorkers from 2021 to 2024 (with rates declining from **15.6** times higher to **5.9** times higher for Black compared to white residents and from **4.6** times higher to **3.2** times higher for Hispanic to white residents) (**Exhibit 10.d**).

### Racial Disparities Intersecting with Socioeconomic Disparities

- **Significant racial disparities in low-income neighborhoods:** Black and Hispanic residents in neighborhoods with a median income under \$50,000 per year received **95%** of all summonses issued in 2023 and 2024 (**Exhibit 11a**). However, racial disparities continued to persist in neighborhoods

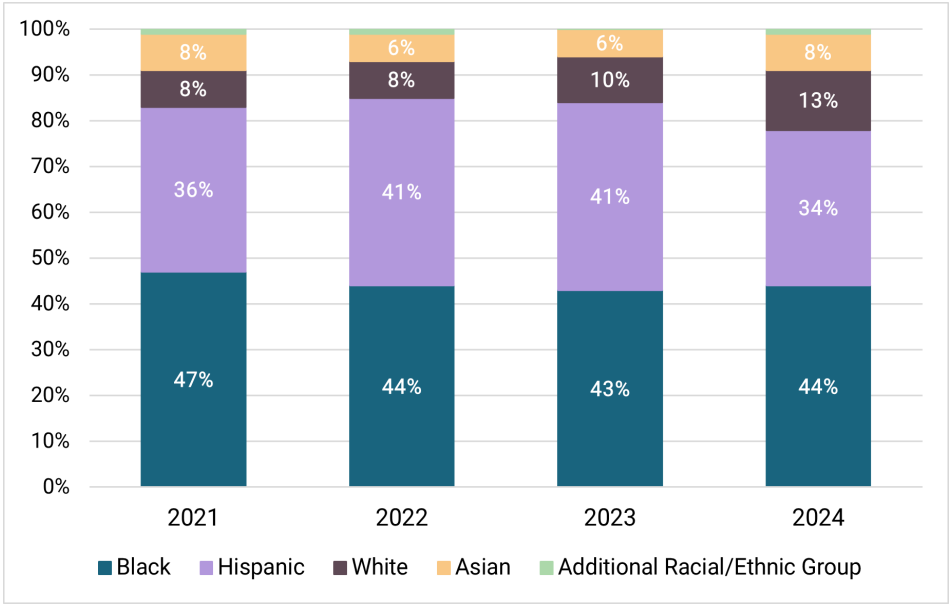


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with different median incomes, with Black and Hispanic residents accounting for **no less than 63%** of all docketed summonses issued in low, medium, and high-income neighborhoods alike in both 2023 and 2024.

- **Especially large racial disparities in high-income neighborhoods:** Relative to the composition of the general population, *disparities were largest in high-income neighborhoods*. Black and Hispanic New Yorkers who live in neighborhoods with a median household income above \$125,000 accounted for, respectively, **40%** and **24%** of docketed summonses in 2024, despite only making up **6%** and **10%** of the general population in high median income neighborhoods (**Exhibit 11e**). Other neighborhoods showed racial disparities, as well, though not as large as in neighborhoods with the highest incomes; for Black and Hispanic New Yorkers residing in neighborhoods with a median household income between \$100,000-\$124,999, for example, they received 33% and 30% of summonses respectively issued in 2024, despite making up only 12% and 16% of the general population.

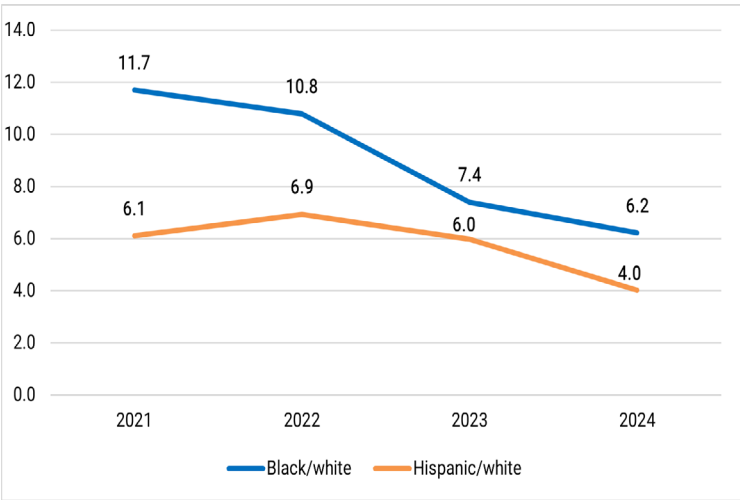
EXHIBIT 9.  
Criminal Summonses by Race/Ethnicity 2021-2024



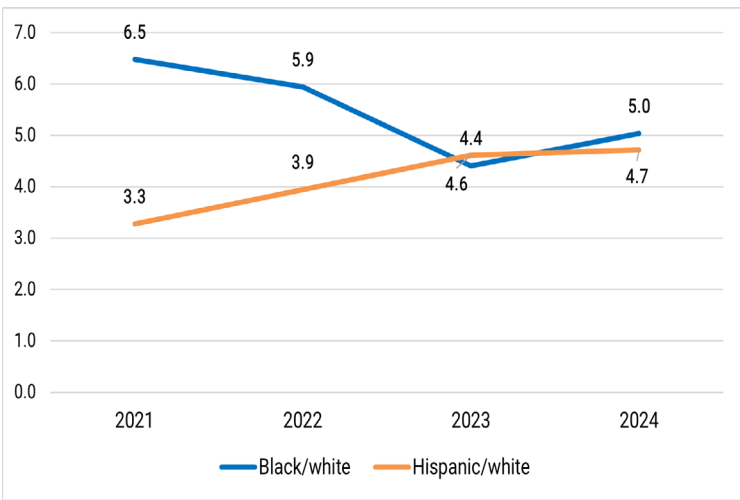
Note: Additional racial/ethnic group each = 1% of total summonses issued. This exhibit excludes summonses with missing race/ethnicity data: 13% of summonses were missing race/ethnicity data in 2021, 11% in 2022, 9% in 2023, and 8% in 2024.

EXHIBIT 10.  
Racial Disparities and Rate Ratios

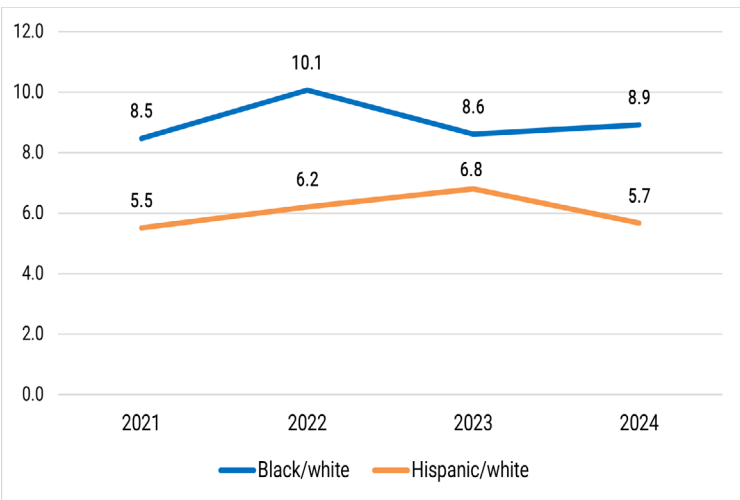
a. Citywide Rate Ratios



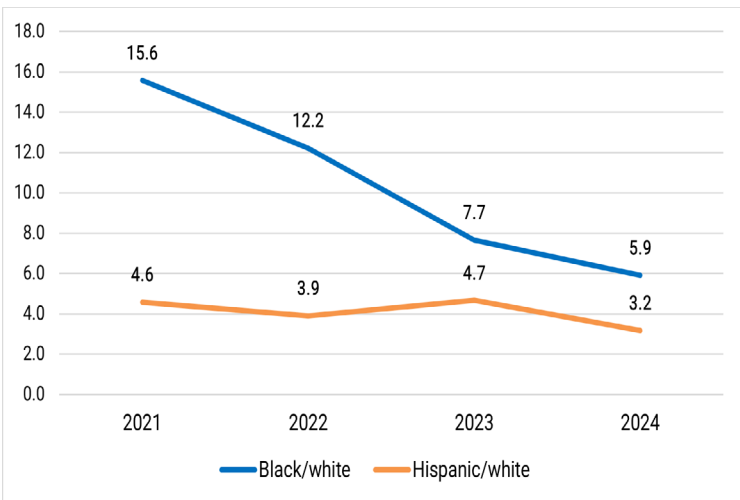
b. Bronx Rate Ratios



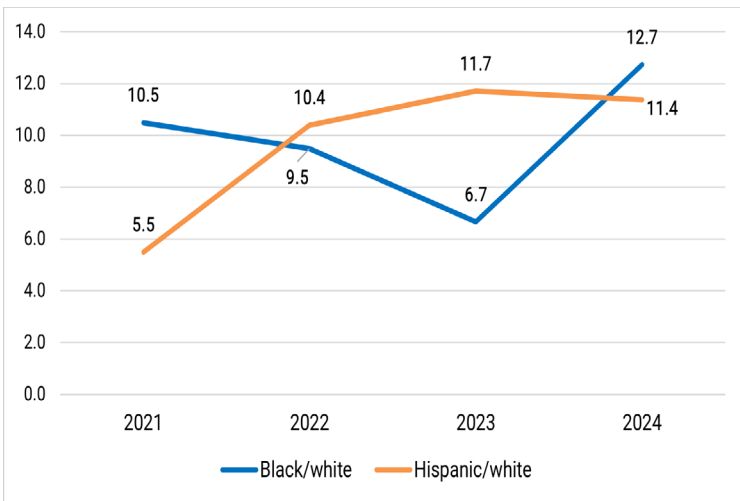
c. Brooklyn Rate Ratios



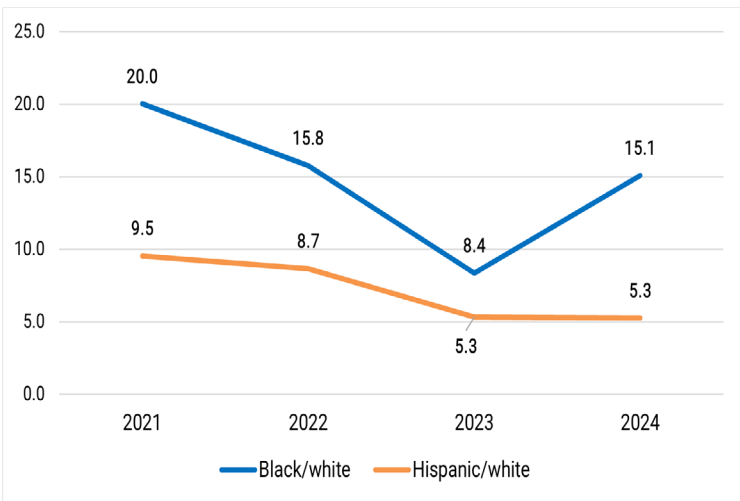
d. Manhattan Rate Ratios



e. Queens Rate Ratios



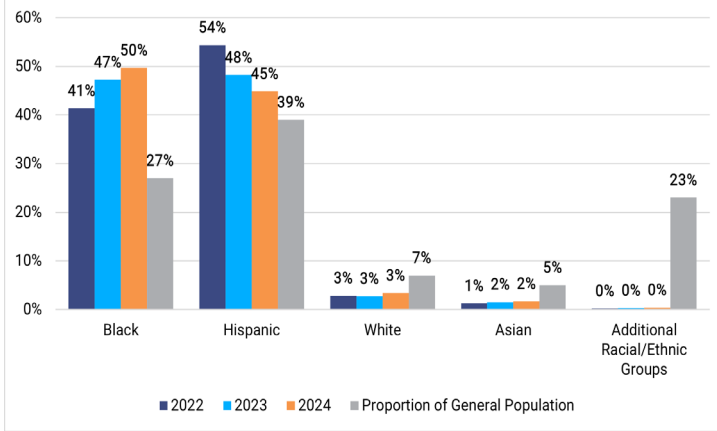
f. Staten Island Rate Ratios



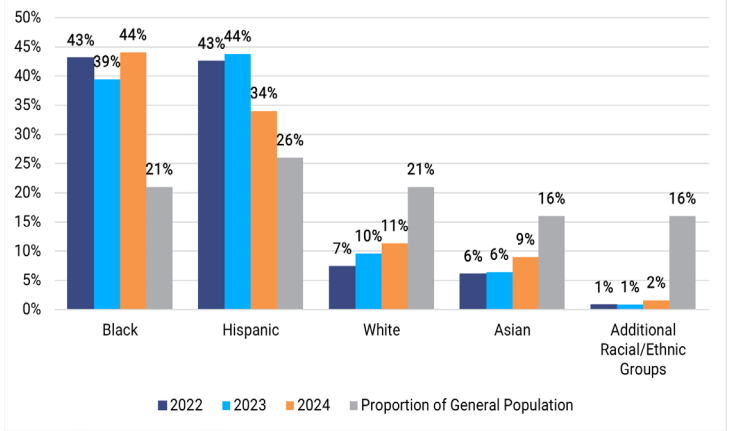
# RESEARCH BRIEF: TRENDS IN CRIMINAL SUMMONSES, 2023-2024

## EXHIBIT 11. Racial Disparities by Neighborhood Income Quintile

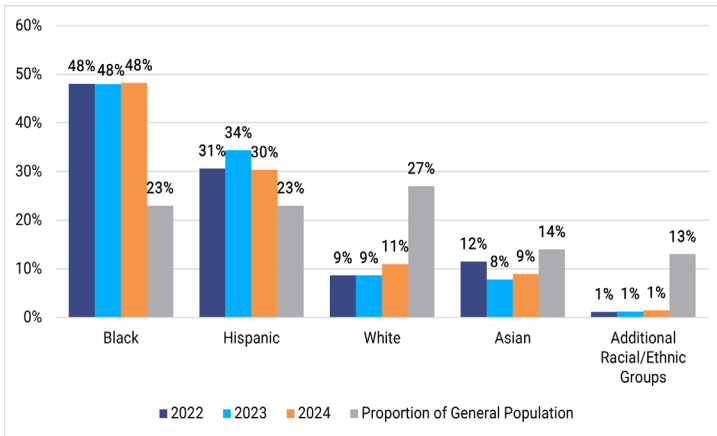
**a. NYC Zip Codes with Median Household Income \$25,000 - \$49,999**



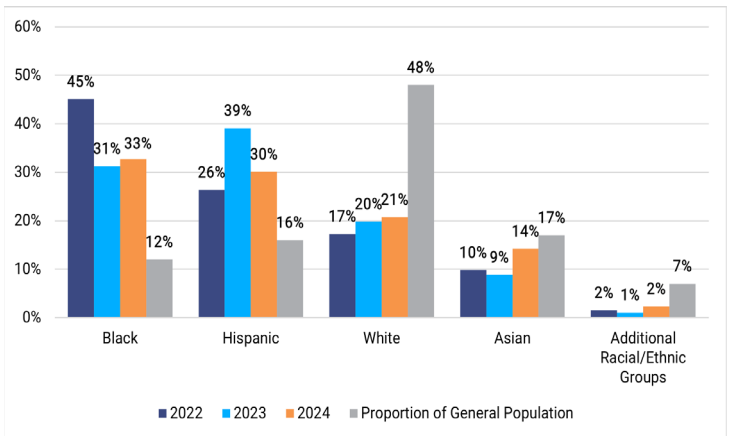
**b. NYC Zip Codes with Median Household Income \$50,000-74,999**



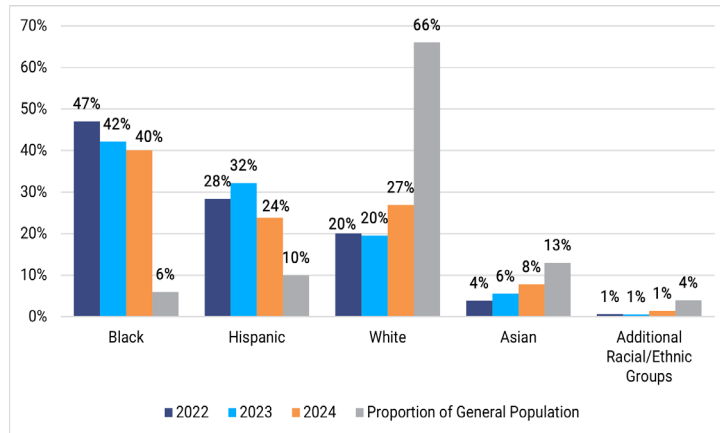
**c. NYC Zip Codes with Median Household Income \$75,000-99,999**



**d. NYC Zip Codes with Median Household Income \$100,000-124,999**



**e. NYC Zip Codes with Median Household Income \$125,000+**



### **Acknowledgements**

We're indebted to our colleague, Joanna Weill, for her valuable feedback on an earlier version of this brief. We are also grateful to Carolyn Cadoret, Karen Kane, Jennifer Weintraub, and Annette Parisi at the New York State Office of Court Administration for providing criminal summons data and graciously answering our questions. Any data provided herein does not constitute an official record of the New York State Unified Court System, which does not represent or warrant the accuracy thereof. The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not of the New York State Unified Court System, which assumes no liability for its contents or use thereof.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Stenkamp, A. & Rempel, M. (2024). [Racial and Neighborhood Disparities in New York City Criminal Summons Practices](#). New York, NY: Data Collaborative for Justice.

<sup>2</sup> New York City Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative. [Reform Plan](#).

<sup>3</sup> New York City Police Department. [NYPD Patrol Guide](#).

<sup>4</sup> Koppel, S. & Stenkamp, A. (2024). [Racial Disparities in New York City Civil Summonses, 2019-2022](#). New York, NY: Data Collaborative for Justice; Stenkamp, A. & Rempel, M. (2024), Op Cit.

<sup>5</sup> Koppel, S., Rempel, M., Xie, M., Lu, O., Travis, T., & Chauhan, P. (2025). [Justice at a Crossroads in New York City: Reexamining Crime, Enforcement, Incarceration, and Racial Disparities](#). New York, NY: Data Collaborative for Justice and University of Maryland. Public criminal summonses data made available by the NYPD and used in this report may be found at NYC Open Data. [NYPD Criminal Court Summons \(Historic\)](#).

<sup>6</sup> N.Y. State Senate (n.d.) [Senate Bill S1509C](#). The New York State Senate. Retrieved August 18, 2025.

<sup>7</sup> “Original not on file” indicates that the police officer dropped off the wrong copy of the summons form. The top, white page is the copy that goes to the court, but if the court instead received the underlying yellow or pink pages, the summons cannot be scanned and the court considers it defective and rejected.

<sup>8</sup> Under the CJRA, the NYPD continued to be allowed to issue a criminal over a civil summons for eligible offenses for the following reasons: the individual had an outstanding warrant; accumulated three or more unanswered civil summonses within eight years; had two or more felony arrests within two years; was on parole and probation; or the police officer asserted a legitimate law enforcement reason for a criminal summons; see Tomascak, S., Grimsley, E., Mulligan, K., and Chauhan, P. (2021). [Evaluating the Impact of New York City’s Criminal Justice Reform Act: Summons Issuance and Outcomes in the 18 Months After Implementation](#). New York, NY: Data Collaborative for Justice.

<sup>9</sup> IBID.

<sup>10</sup> An ACD leads the summons to be dismissed if the person does not receive another summons within a certain time frame.

<sup>11</sup> Feeley, M. M. (1992). *The Process is the Punishment: Handling Cases in a Lower Criminal Court*. Russell Sage Foundation.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). [Quick Facts New York City, New York](#). U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved July 7, 2025.

<sup>13</sup> Only those over 18 years old and those with residences in NYC were included in the rate ratios. Rate ratios for 2024 used the 2023 5-year ACS census data due to data availability.

<sup>14</sup> The general population was calculated using data from the American Community Survey census, which is publicly available on [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov). The population for the rates was calculated by including all individuals 18 and over in the general population for each racial group. The census provides the following categories for race, which were used as a match for categories within the summons data: “Black or African American alone,” “Hispanic or Latino,” “White alone, not Hispanic or Latino,” “Asian alone,” “American Indian and Alaska Native alone,” “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone,” and “Some other race alone.” For the purposes of this report, “American Indian and Alaska Native alone,” “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone,” and “Some other race alone” were combined to match with “Additional Racial/Ethnic Groups.” Of note, there is no “Black alone, not Hispanic or Latino by Age”, nor “Some other race alone, not Hispanic or Latino by Age” category available in the census data (meaning we could not calculate those who identify as Black alone, not Hispanic or Latino over the age of 18 nor separate out individuals who identified as Some other race alone, not Hispanic or Latino over the age of 18). Thus, all individuals who identify as Black or Black Hispanic are encompassed in the “Black alone” category when calculating these rates and rate ratios. This indicates a significant caveat to using census data when drawing comparisons, and we recognize there is likely a margin of error (in that the “Black alone” category is likely inflated with the inclusion of both Black and Black Hispanic individuals). There is evidence that individuals with Hispanic/Latino origin identify both as Hispanic/Latino and Some other race, likely inflating the general population of the Additional groups category.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). [Sex by Age \(Black or African American Alone\)](#) U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved July 7, 2025.