



## Session 10 | Police, Police Oversight, and Our Youth: Giving Young People a Voice in Police Oversight

August 4, 2020

3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. EDT

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In 2019 the New York City Civilian Complaint took on the initiative to focus more directly on youth. Through a multi-pronged approach, the Agency focused on understanding why young people do not file complaints with the CCRB, how many young people know about the CCRB, and how young people feel about their interactions with police officers. The presentation will focus on 3 initiatives the CCRB took in regard to youth and how that has fundamentally changed the Agency and how it does its work.

First, the CCRB launched a Youth Advisory Council (YAC), recruiting 20 young people between the ages of 10 and 24, who met regularly to learn about the CCRB, advise staff on how to conduct outreach to young individuals, and worked with the Staff to put on the first-ever youth summit on policing in New York City. Speak Up; Speak Out was a day-long summit that brought together over 250 young people from all over New York City to discuss issues of policing. The day consisted of two youth panels, small breakout sessions where young people got to work with academics, practitioners, and advocates working on policing, and finally an art exhibit displaying art created by young people on policing.

Secondly, the CCRB became more deliberate on conducting youth focused outreach. The outreach team created a curriculum to run in schools focusing not only on outreach about the Agency but also conducting Know Your Rights workshops, and talking to kids about leadership and community service. Furthermore, the CCRB made sure to connect with youth in non-traditional spaces, launching CCRB Courtside, a Salon Series, and working in schools for court involved youth.

Finally, the CCRB worked on a youth report to be released in early 2020 incorporating an in-depth analysis of the complaints received from young people, analyzing data and anecdotes collected at the 2019 youth summit, and taking a look at NYPD guidelines on interactions with young people in New York City. The report examines the patterns and trends seen amongst youth complainants and victims and takes a more in-depth approach interviewing youth and youth advocates to understand the impact of negative interactions with the police.

During this panel, the NYC Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) will present the findings from its 2020 Youth report, talk through its successes in targeted outreach and discuss the importance of a Youth Advisory Council which is already being replicated by the NYC Commission on Human Rights.

### Speakers:

- Yojaira Alvarez, Director of Outreach and Intergovernmental Affairs, New York Civilian Complaint Review Board, New York, NY
- Christopher Mitchell, Member, CCRB Youth Advisory Council, New York, NY
- Harya Tarekegn, Deputy Director and Senior Counsel for Policy and Advocacy, New York Civilian Complaint Review Board, New York, NY

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**Yojaira Alvarez** | Yojaira Alvarez serves as Director of Outreach and Intergovernmental Affairs at the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board, the nation's largest independent, all-civilian police



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oversight entity. In this role, she leads a team that informs and educates the public about the structure and authority of the CCRB, civilians' rights and responsibilities during police encounters, and how to file a complaint with the agency. She is also a liaison between the oversight board and state and local elected officials, strengthening the agency's relationships within government and working toward the implementation of laws and policies that improve civilian oversight of the New York City Police Department.

Yojaira holds a Bachelor of Arts in Comparative Ethnic Studies from Columbia University, where she pursued an individualized course of study investigating the intersection of race and law and wrote her thesis examining youth offender laws in New York.

**Christopher Mitchell** | Christopher Mitchell is a member of the inaugural class of the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board's Youth Advisory Council. Chris is the middle child between his nine-year-old brother, Chess Master Justin Mitchell, and his 17-year-old sister, Myah Victoria Mitchell. Christopher would like to go into the profession of law and become a Supreme Court Justice one day. As a member of Prep for Prep's Contingent he will be attending the Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Connecticut this coming fall. Christopher enjoys reading and speaking up for those whose voices aren't normally heard, to create a positive and inclusive society that is productive and beneficial for all. Christopher serves as president of his school's chapter of the National Junior Honor Society, and is currently ranked number one in the graduating class of 2020.

**Harya Tarekegn** | Harya Tarekegn is Deputy Director and Senior Counsel for Policy and Advocacy for the nation's largest independent police oversight agency, the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB). In this role, Ms. Tarekegn focuses on analyzing New York City Police Department misconduct data, generating policy reports, and issuing recommendations to improve police-community relations. She also connects with community advocates and elected officials to develop strategies for improving the Agency's connection to the public and advancing a legislative agenda.

Prior to joining the CCRB, Ms. Tarekegn worked as the Executive Director and Partner of Moreno Ocampo LLC, a global consulting firm where she managed a team of global attorneys and communications experts focused on developing tailored strategies to manage complex conflicts including addressing the human rights violations perpetrated against Yazidi women and girls in Iraq. Ms. Tarekegn brings with her a perspective shaped by representing indigent defendants in New York City, conducting bail reform in Nairobi, Kenya, and supporting incarcerated teens in Santa Clara Juvenile Hall.

Ms. Tarekegn's commitment to public service extends beyond her work with the CCRB. Ms. Tarekegn is a Founder and Strategy Director for Rising Leaders, Inc., a non-profit providing low-income or underserved students with high-quality mentorship and leadership development training. In 2015-2016 she mentored with America Needs You and continues to work with the organization.

Ms. Tarekegn holds a Juris Doctor from the New York University School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from Stanford University.



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