



George Latimer
County Executive

WHEREAS, a vacancy exists in the membership of the Westchester County Domestic Violence Council:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, George Latimer, County Executive of Westchester County, in accordance with the terms and provisions of the Westchester County Charter, appoint Nicole Furie Lesser, LCSW, 24 Rose Street, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York as an at-large member of the Westchester County Domestic Violence Council, for the term March 8, 2022 to December 31, 2024.

Given under my hand
and seal this 8th day
of March, 2022.



George Latimer
County Executive

Office of the County Executive

Michaelian Office Building
148 Martine Avenue
White Plains, New York 10601

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George Latimer
County Executive

March 8, 2022

Ms. Nicole Furie Lesser, LCSW
24 Rose Street
Hastings-On-Hudson, NY 10706

Dear Ms. Lesser,

It is my pleasure to appoint you to serve as an at-large member of the Westchester County Domestic Violence Council, effective today, Tuesday, March 8, 2022, pursuant to the Laws of Westchester County §277.601. This appointment is for a term to expire on December 31, 2024.

Your appointment is subject to confirmation by the Westchester County Board of Legislators, but your service begins immediately. You must complete the attached Oath of Office and file it with the County Clerk prior to the next Domestic Violence Council meeting, and provide this office with a copy within 30 days. Please contact the Westchester County Office for Women at (914) 995-5972 for the date, place, and time of the Domestic Violence Council's upcoming meeting for your participation.

When you have filed your Oath of Office, a Resolution to confirm your appointment will be submitted to the County Board of Legislators. As part of the confirmation process, you may be called before the Board to be interviewed.

Pursuant to Local Law, as a member of a Westchester County Board and/or Commission, you are responsible for adhering to the requirements of our Code of Ethics.

Warmest wishes for a successful tenure.

Very Truly Yours,



George Latimer
Westchester County Executive

GL/ts

cc: Honorable Board of Legislators
Robin Schlaff, Director – Office for Women
Joan McDonald, Director of Operations

Office of the County Executive

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NICOLE FURIE LESSER, LCSW

24 Rose Street, Hastings on Hudson, New York 10706
Phone: 617-347-5598 Email: nicole.lesser424@gmail.com

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

A social worker specializing in social justice, collaborative systemic change, nonprofit management and program design. Works with organizations to envision, develop, and implement strategic initiatives that create meaningful impact.

Education

- Boston University School of Social Work, Boston, MA 1995
- Master of Social Work, Focus on Clinical Work with Adolescents and Families
 - Chairperson, Women's Caucus
- The George Washington University, Washington, DC 1989
- Bachelor of Arts, Sociology with Minors in Geography and Psychology

Experience

Personal Legislative Aide, MaryJane Shimsky, Westchester County Board of Legislators 2019 – 2020
Provided support to Legislator Shimsky on Board of Legislators committee work and constituent concerns.

Lecturer, Columbia University School of Social Work 2018 – 2019
Masters Level Classes Taught: Macro Community Practice; Social Planning and Program Development.

Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America – NY 2016 – 2019

- Positions Held: Local Group Lead – Westchester and Rockland Counties; State Deputy Chapter Lead; State Chapter Co-Lead*
Grassroots movement campaigning for gun sense legislation and other public safety measures to protect people from gun violence.
- **Founder:** Local Group Lead - Westchester County. Recruited and formed 18 member leadership team who together grew chapter membership to 5,000 in three years.
 - **Advocacy:** Initiated NY Gun Sense Candidate campaigns statewide, leading to the passage of the most comprehensive gun violence prevention legislation passage in the last 5 years.
 - **Operations:** Created state policies and procedures for Events, Volunteer Onboarding, Reimbursements, and Data Collection.
 - **Management:** Grew state leadership team from 75 to 100 volunteers. Planned Leadership Retreat and ongoing trainings for leaders and members.
 - **Diversity:** Initiated Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity priorities for local groups across the state.
 - **Trainer:** Presented and lead discussion groups at the Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America annual conference.

Executive Director, Girls Inc. Westchester, White Plains, NY 2014 – 2015

- Gender-based afterschool program teaching life, career, and leadership skills.
- **Development:** Planned and executed all aspects of annual fundraiser, including sponsorships, ticket sales, volunteer management, marketing and program materials in just four months netting \$100,000. Obtained program support from multiple corporations including Chubb, Colgate, Con Edison, IBM, M&T Bank, New York Life, and TD Bank.
 - **Operations:** Obtained office space and successfully moved agency to new offices for the first time in its history.
 - **Board of Directors:** Conducted board retreat and new board orientation to inform board members of board roles and nonprofit best practices. Developed Board Binder with agency and board policies, bylaws, program information, budget and fiscal information, and marketing materials.
 - **Programming:** Collaborated with the Natural Sciences Department at Purchase College, SUNY to develop a two-week STEM camp for 7th and 8th graders, which included computer coding and environmental sciences. Initiated new one on one mentoring program.
 - **Advocacy:** Successfully lobbied national Girls Inc. to include public policy as a priority goal in its strategic plan.
 - Featured as a "Thought Leader" in the 2015 Q3 *914 Inc.* (Westchester's business magazine).

Director, Freedom House, Barrier Free Living, New York, NY

2013 – 2014

Domestic violence shelter providing services for people with disabilities.

- **Services:** Expanded eligibility criteria to reflect mission, vision, and values. Obtained a 97.3% occupancy rate in the first 9 months, an increase of over 35%.
- **Staffing:** Increased revenue and secured raises for all staff for the first time since 2010. Initiated comprehensive training program providing over 40 trainings to staff within five months, including training on trauma informed care from the National Network to End Domestic Violence.
- **Management:** Initiated efforts within the management team and the agency board to create a strategic plan and begin succession planning for the retirement of the agency's founding CEO.
- **Collaborations:** Developed linkage agreements with the Anti Violence Project and the Urban Justice Center. Worked closely with New York Family Justice Centers to increase access for survivors of domestic violence with disabilities.
- **Coalitions:** Member of the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the New York City Residential Services Providers Coalition, and the Gender Justice Council. Leadership member of Building Bridges, working to create a shared understanding of abuse across the lifespan through a multidisciplinary approach.

Executive Director, Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Decatur, GA

2009 – 2012

Statewide membership agency working to end domestic violence in Georgia.

- **Staffing:** Led team that between FY2010 and FY2011 responded to over 1500 requests for technical assistance, a 66% increase; reached over 1,000 advocates, allied professionals and community members through new communication initiatives, a 150% increase; distributed over 100,000 reports and materials, a 257% increase.
- **Development:** Increased unrestricted funds by 160%. Secured sponsorships for Stop Violence Against Women Advocacy Day from Verizon Wireless, Mary Kay and Canterbury Press. Worked with corporations on social responsibility and community giving events including: Verizon Wireless, Mary Kay, Mattress Firm, Marriott, Rooms to Go and Soma Intimates.
- **Public Policy:** Advocated for funding and supportive public policies on behalf of member programs and survivors at the Georgia General Assembly, Georgia Department of Human Services, Georgia Department of Public Health, Georgia Department of Education, Georgia Commission on Family Violence and the US Congress. Introduced HB711, a bill to create privileged communications between survivors and advocates and to reduce batterers' tools to manipulate the justice system. The bill was the first pro-active domestic violence bill in 8 years and passed with overwhelming support. Obtained exemptions for domestic violence service programs serving immigrants from the "harboring and transporting" provision and for immigrant victims needing to call the police or seek services in HB87.
- **Underserved Populations:** Initiated activities to address the needs of underserved communities including teens, immigrants and refugees, women of color, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered communities, and disability communities. Worked with the Women of Color Network on Undoing Racism within the agency and membership.
- **Membership:** Increased membership by 73%. Developed systems for communication with member programs including weekly e-blasts. Created members-only pages on agency website for intra-member communications. Initiated staff liaisons for each member program. Raised value of membership by increasing media coverage, obtaining corporate donations for member programs and initiating other community collaborative efforts. On average, 99% of member attendees rated trainings as "excellent" or "good".
- **Communications:** Created communications department and developed new agency website, annual report, brochure, services slicks, e-newsletter and media kits. Interviewed by multiple media outlets including: Atlanta Journal Constitution, WABE (NPR Affiliate), Georgia Public Broadcasting, WSB TV Atlanta and CBS Atlanta.
- **Board of Directors:** Rewrote agency by-laws and expanded board of directors by 60%. Moved from a member program board to a nonprofit governance board with outside community members to achieve strategic and financial goals. Adopted new personnel policies, fiscal policies and strategic plan.

Executive Director, Victims Services Office of the Fulton County District Attorney, Atlanta, GA

2008 – 2009

Victim Services Departments working with survivors of crime to help them navigate the criminal justice system, know their rights, and help them access benefits and supports.

- **Staffing:** Obtained and managed benefited positions for all Victim/Witness Assistance Program staff. Initiated Secondary Traumatic Stress educational and support programs to mitigate the effects of hearing traumatic felony violence cases daily.
- **Research:** Chaired the Fulton County Fatality Review of the CNN/Omni domestic violence shooting for policy change recommendations. Outcomes included the need for employers to understand domestic violence and play a part in keeping their employees safe.

- Program Development: Wrote the operation procedures for SafeSPOTS – a program created by the Atlanta Fire Department, Office of the Mayor, Fulton County District Attorney's Office, and GA Department of Human Services to create a safe place for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking to flee if they do not want to go to the police.
- Quality Improvement: Implemented Quality Evaluation and Improvement Initiatives through statistical data collection and reporting, client surveys, operations & training manuals and programmatic outcome measures.

Director, Kol Isha, Jewish Family and Children's Service, Waltham, MA

2000 – 2008

Domestic Violence Service Program providing culturally sensitive services to all survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking with specialized services for Jewish and Russian-speaking survivors.

- Development: Increased initial budget from \$25,000 to over \$500,000 through US Department of Justice and state grants, local foundations, individual donors and event sponsors.
- Staffing: Managed staff, interns and volunteers and created atmosphere of support and cohesion. Provided training for staff around Secondary Traumatic Stress and self-care.
- Program Design: Created new domestic violence service program offering counseling, safety planning, court advocacy, case management, and support groups. Developed strategic plans, policies and procedures for the program and safety protocols for the agency. Promoted program visibility: developed marketing materials, maintained relations with the media and oversaw community outreach initiatives.
- Collaborations: Worked closely with programs across the agency, increasing referrals and paving the way for agency staff experiencing abuse to seek domestic violence services.
- Quality Improvement: Created quality improvement goals and measurable outcomes across program initiatives. 93% of clients demonstrated new knowledge about abusive behaviors and patterns of abuse. 91% of clients became aware of other people who share their situation. 88% of clients demonstrated knowledge that the abuse was not their fault and that the abuser was responsible for the abuse.
- Coalitions: Leadership member of Friends of RISE (Refugee and Immigrants Safety and Empowerment), a group of advocates working for the restoration of state funds for domestic violence services for refugees and immigrants. Funds were restored.

Social Worker, Needham Youth Commission, Needham, MA

1997 – 2000

Town funded youth counseling agency providing therapy, case management and substance abuse prevention programs for teens and their parents.

- Services: Conducted school and clinic based individual and group therapy with Needham Public School children and their families. Provided counseling and court advocacy for adolescent and adult survivors of domestic abuse.
- Program Design: Obtained funding and implemented new education program for the Needham Public Schools illustrating the legal, emotional and protective issues related to teen dating violence. Included training for administrators and faculty, and for all 9th and 10th graders. Developed curriculum, raised funds, marketed and facilitated semiannual, four-day seminar for adolescent girls examining the media's influence on self-esteem, body image and relationships.
- Coalitions: Worked with representatives from the Board of Health, Needham Police, District Attorney's office, local shelters and other community groups through of the Needham Domestic Violence Action Committee.
- Program Development: Streamlined, marketed and managed town-wide volunteer program of 45 student pairs for weekly tutoring/mentoring.

Youth Coordinator, Dedham Youth Commission, Dedham, MA

1995 – 1997

Town funded youth counseling agency providing therapy, court advocacy, case management and support groups to middle and high school students.

- Services: Counseled Dedham High School students and families around issues of substance abuse, depression, suicide, anxiety, eating disorders, mental illness, education and domestic abuse. Provided counseling and court advocacy for adolescent and adult survivors of domestic abuse. Co-led therapy group for at-risk teens with school personnel at the Dedham Alternative High School.
- Program Design: Developed pregnancy prevention, self-esteem and wellness, and social skills building programs.
- Coalitions: Represented Town of Dedham at the Norfolk County Domestic Violence Roundtable; planned and conducted domestic violence awareness programs for Norfolk County administrative school staff.
- Collaborations: Worked closely with police, courts, DSS and other mental health providers. Member of the Dedham School Department Crisis Management Team.

Trainings Presented

- Delegating: Making the Ask
- Role of the Nonprofit Board and Executive Director Responsibilities
- Creating Coalitions and Coordinated Community Responses
- Cultural Competency and Religious Sensitivity in Domestic Violence Services
- An Introduction to Working with Survivors of Domestic Violence
- Child Abuse and Mandated Reporting
- From the ER to the Court Room: Interpreting in Domestic Violence Cases
- Hope in the Face of Fear: Creating a Safe Haven for Survivors of Domestic Violence
- Recognizing and Responding to Teen Dating Violence

Government Activities, Honors, and Awards

- Received the 2012 "Moving the Work Forward Award" from the Georgia Commission on Family Violence for outstanding vision, collaboration, creativity, and commitment to safety and justice for victims of family violence
- Invited by the US Department of Health and Human Services to participate in the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program's Domestic Violence Evidence Project's "Coalition Performance Progress Report Outcomes Work Group", which is charged with creating measurable outcomes that illuminate the critical role state coalitions have in addressing intimate partner violence - 2012
- Met with US Senators and Representatives to discuss reauthorization and funding of the Family Violence and Prevention Services Act, Victim of Crimes Act and Violence Against Women Act all of which were reauthorized and funded – 2012, 2011, 2010, 2005
- Lecturer at the CDC Museum exhibit "Off the Beaten Path: Violence, Women and Art" – 2011
- Panelist at CDC Pathways to Prevention: Ending Violence Against Women Discussion – 2011
- Attended invitation only White House Briefing on the Obama Administration's collaborative efforts to stop violence against women – 2011
- Met with Lynn Rosenthal, the first ever White House Advisor on Violence Against Women, to discuss domestic violence policy concerns for the White House to address– 2011
- Collaborated with the Georgia Secretary of State to implement VoteSafe, which allows victims of domestic violence to register to vote and keep their address confidential - 2010
- Initiated the formation of the Probate Court Committee of the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Sexual and Domestic Violence to create policies that protect child abuse victims in domestic violence custody cases - 2006
- Testified at the Massachusetts State House against shared parenting bills that would have removed the "In the Best Interest of the Child" standard in custody cases. Shared parenting bills did not pass – 2005

Previous Committee Memberships

- Program Committee - National Network to End Domestic Violence
- Georgia Injury Prevention Advisory Council
- Georgia Gives Leadership Team - Georgia Center for Nonprofits
- State Planning Team - Georgia Commission on Family Violence
- Conference Planning Team - Domestic Violence Resource Network
- Domestic Violence Constituent Council - Georgia Department of Human Services
- Fulton County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team, Domestic Violence Task Force, Child Multi-Disciplinary Team, and Family Care Network
- Planning Committee – SafeSPOTS, Atlanta Fire Rescue Department
- Task Force on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children – Juvenile Justice Fund
- Legislative Advisory Committee - Jane Doe, Inc.
- Probate Court Committee and Child & Adolescent Committee member - Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Sexual and Domestic Violence
- Leadership Team, Friends of RISE (Refugee and Immigrants Safety and Empowerment)
- Conference Planning Committee, 2nd International Conference on Domestic Violence in the Jewish Community – Jewish Women International

**COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER
OATH OF OFFICE**

For Appointees to County Boards and Commissions

STATE OF NEW YORK)
) ss.:
COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER)

I, NICOLE LESSER do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support
(Print or Type Name)

the constitution of the United States, and the constitution of the State of New York, and that I will
faithfully discharge the duties of the office of W.C. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT CLERK in and for the
County of Westchester, according to the best of my ability.

Date: 3/21/22 Nicole Lesser
(Signature)

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 21 day of March,
2022.

[Signature]
(Signature)

TIMOTHY L. DODD
(Print or Type Name)

County Clerk
(Title of Official Administering Oath)

Mail original Oath of Office to Office to Andrew Ferris, Office of the County Executive, 148 Martine Ave., Room 916D, White Plains, NY 10601 for filing within thirty (30) days of the commencement of the term of office or the notice of appointment.