

# WESTCHESTER COUNTY

## 2026 Joint State Legislative Package



**WESTCHESTER**  
COUNTY



Kenneth W. Jenkins, Westchester County Executive  
Vedat Gashi, Chairman, Westchester County Board of Legislators  
Colin D. Smith, Chair, Committee on Legislation



**Vedat Gashi, Chairman**  
Westchester County Board of  
Legislators



**Kenneth W. Jenkins**  
Westchester County Executive

February 27, 2026

Hon. Kathy Hochul, NYS Governor  
Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins, NYS Senate Majority Leader  
Hon. Carl Heastie, NYS Assembly Speaker  
Honorable Senators and Assembly Members, Westchester County Delegation

Thank you as always for your tireless efforts on behalf of Westchester County.

Last year, you helped us secure Design Build authorization for four crucial projects, ensured the reauthorization of the Westchester County Property Taxpayer Protection Act, held the line on the 18B Assigned Counsel Rate Reimbursement, and ensured that the final budget did not breach the Medicaid cap. Your efforts have protected Westchester's residents from tremendous new costs at a time when residents' budgets are limited.

This year, Westchester faces challenges, and fresh opportunities.

Hostility from the Federal government continues; the Trump Administration has levied over \$177 million in cuts, new costs, and stripped services on our County – over 7% of our total budget. Although many of these losses are currently blocked by ongoing lawsuits, should they come to pass, Westchester County will face a fiscal crisis perhaps unparalleled in the County's history.

Simultaneously, Governor Hochul has committed to new expenditures in childcare, and is taking fresh State action to streamline the process of creating new housing, all in pursuit of making New York stronger, safer and more affordable. Westchester stands ready to partner with New York State to accomplish these laudable goals.

Enclosed are a series of requests which enhance childcare options for Westchester's families, which reduce costs for County government, which protect our environment, and which will reduce utility costs for ratepayers.

Westchester County looks forward to working collaboratively with you to deliver a stronger, safer and more affordable County for all of our residents

Sincerely,

Vedat Gashi, Chairman  
Westchester County Board of Legislators

Kenneth W. Jenkins  
Westchester County Executive

Colin Smith, Chair  
Committee on Legislation

# 2026 WESTCHESTER COUNTY JOINT STATE LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE

*Vedat Gashi, Chairman*  
Westchester County Board of Legislators

*Kenneth W. Jenkins*  
Westchester County Executive

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# *FINANCE*

## Section I

## **Fund Westchester's Child Care Block Grant and Scholarship Programs**

### REQUEST

Allocate \$35 million to cover the costs of Westchester County's Child Care Block Grant (CCBG) program, and \$1.5 million to allow Westchester to provide childcare to the remaining population of families at up to 300% Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

### JUSTIFICATION

Childcare costs are rising for working families all across New York State. Westchester County applauds Governor Hochul's efforts to implement universal childcare on a statewide basis.

State-mandated childcare options are provided through the CCBG; federal revenue passed through the State, who set the rules and requirements for its use, and then is utilized programmatically by local governments. Childcare is particularly burdensome to families in Westchester County; many families in need of support have incomes beyond state-mandated eligibility requirements, due to Westchester's higher cost of living.

To support families outside of State-eligibility Westchester County created the Childcare Scholarship Program, which reimburses families for childcare costs using County tax levy funding. Families at up to 300% FPL are eligible. This breaks out as follows:

- Family of 2: \$73,870 - \$102,200
- Family of 3: \$91,251 - \$129,100
- Family of 4: \$108,632 - \$156,000
- Family of 5: \$126,013 - \$182,900

Unfortunately, Westchester does not have enough funding to cover all families at up to 300% FPL. Worse, Westchester is in dire need of state funding to sustain the operation of its CCBG program; we are facing increased costs and demand with more limited funding due to a reduced parent share, the volatile economic environment, and ever-looming federal cuts.

Last year, New York State allocated \$400 million for childcare statewide, but gave \$350 million of that to New York City. Recently, Governor Hochul announced that Dutchess, Monroe and Broome would receive \$20 million each to develop and build out their childcare programming. Westchester's programs are well-established, effective and meet families where their needs are.

Westchester needs a larger, reliable allocation to cover our costs and stabilize our existing program – considering recent investments, our request aligns with existing State commitments in this field.

As such, in order to secure childcare for Westchester's working families, Westchester asks for \$35 million in state funding to cover the costs of our CCBG program and \$1.5 million to cover families at up to 300% FPL.

### HISTORY

This item is a new request.

**Authorize Design Build for Flooding Projects in Westchester County**

REQUEST

Provide Westchester County with authorization to utilize Design-Build project delivery for flooding-related projects.

JUSTIFICATION

In 2019, seven New York City agencies received authorization to utilize Design-Build project delivery (as opposed to Design-Bid-Build) through the Public Works Investment Act (PWIA). Design-Build consolidates projects into one point of responsibility, where design and construction are unified, allowing one team to deliver the best project at the best value.

In 2025, Westchester County secured Design-Build project delivery authorization for four expensive capital projects, providing significant cost savings. Many municipalities in Westchester face serious challenges related to flooding. The federal government has cut funding for FEMA, eliminated grant programs funding flood mitigation efforts, and shut down existing programs.

In order to allow Westchester County to continue our work on flood mitigation – a challenge that gets more severe the longer it remains unaddressed – we ask for authorization to utilize Design/Build for flooding-related projects. The cost savings realized by this authorization will allow the County to undertake mitigation work despite increased fiscal pressures from a hostile federal government.

HISTORY

This item is a new request.

Prior Design/Build authorization:

2025-26: [A6428](#) (Shimsky)/[S8394](#) (Stewart Cousins)  
Signed by Governor Hochul on November 21, 2025.

## Fund the Westchester Maternal Health Program (Project Birth)

### REQUEST

Provide Westchester County with \$3 million to continue funding our three part Maternal Health Program (Project Birth).

### JUSTIFICATION

Governor Hochul recently announced a \$5 million investment in a new maternal health care center in the Bronx, which will provide a home-like setting for labor, delivery, and postpartum care, as well as health services before, during, and after birth where care is provided through a midwifery, wellness, and collaborative care.

Since 2023, Westchester County has operated a similar program to improve maternal health in communities of color, yet the County receives no state funding – even though significant parts of Yonkers, Mount Vernon and New Rochelle are coterminous with the Bronx.

Westchester’s program is conducted in partnership with three community partners:

- **Birth from the Earth:** Provides education and holistic, culturally competent care to Black and Indigenous mothers; also provides cross-cultural training and education for birth workers like midwives and doulas. Programming includes support groups, workshops and baby showers.
- **Children’s Health and Research Foundation:** Provides a home-visiting program for mothers in the prenatal and postpartum periods; clients receive health assessments, are connected with preventative and primary care health services, and receive health education. Eligible participants are located in areas with an annual average of 100 or more Medicaid births; this includes Mount Vernon, Yonkers, New Rochelle, White Plains, and Greenburgh.
- **St. John’s Riverside Hospital:** With additional funding, this hospital will continue implementing TeamBirth, an evidence based initiative that focuses on teamwork, open communication and shared-decision making for patient-centered births with improved outcomes.

As such, Westchester asks for parity – we ask that NYS invest \$3 million to allow us to enhance and expand our existing, effective programming. At a minimum, Westchester is in need of \$750,000 to continue operating this program under increasing fiscal strain.

### HISTORY

This item is a new request.

**Fund Administration for the Private Well PFAS Testing and Mitigation  
Rebate Pilot Program**

REQUEST

Allow Westchester County to use 15% of the PFAS Testing and Mitigation Rebate Pilot award, or provide an additional \$225,000 to cover costs associated with program administration.

JUSTIFICATION

New York State recently began work implementing the Private Well PFAS Testing and Mitigation Rebate Pilot Program, which was created as part of the Clean Water Infrastructure Act of 2022.

This program will provide the County with \$1.5 million, with which the County can reimburse homeowners with private wells for the cost of detecting or remediating PFAS contaminants, in cases where no specific industrial source of contamination nor responsible party has been or can be identified.

The cost of staff time to implement this program will be significant – in addition to their existing duties, DOH staff must now review applications, authorize these reimbursements, and track the status of dozens of applicants countywide. Westchester is already facing a variety of fiscal pressures, and our DOH staff have a variety of complex duties.

As such, Westchester requests authorization to use 15% of the award for administration of the program, or an additional allocation of \$225,000 to cover costs associated with program administration.

HISTORY

This item is a new request.

## **Amend the STOA Formula**

### REQUEST

Amend the State Transportation Operating Assistance (STOA) Formula to provide Westchester County financial parity with Nassau County's transit assistance.

### JUSTIFICATION

Westchester County's Bee Line Bus Service has a larger ridership than Nassau County, but receives less in State Transportation Operating Assistance (STOA). The STOA formula currently prioritizes the distance of a transportation system rather than its ridership. This favors counties like Nassau and provides Westchester with a more limited allocation despite its higher ridership and significant transportation issues.

51% of Westchester's riders are transit-dependent, meaning they rely on the Bee Line and do not have a car for their use. Westchester's Bee Line needs more investment over the next decade, and the structural disadvantage of the STOA formula actively denies funding which Westchester would use to improve its routes, to provide a variety of climate friendly transportation routes, and to improve the conditions of its drivers.

As such, Westchester requests that the STOA formula be amended to prioritize the ridership of a system, not the distance which it travels, or that Westchester receives parity with Nassau County's STOA funding.

### HISTORY

This item has been requested every year since 2020.

- 2022 – Westchester County receives \$17.9M less than Nassau County.
- 2023 – Westchester County receives \$19.4M less than Nassau County.
- 2024 – Westchester County receives \$20.5M less than Nassau County.
- 2025 – Westchester County receives \$21.9M less than Nassau County.

***LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES***

Section II

**Provide Peer to Peer Mental Health Support to First Responders**

REQUEST

Provide Peer to Peer Mental Health Support to First Responders.

JUSTIFICATION

Westchester’s first responders frequently face dangerous, stressful, and occasionally life threatening situations. First responders are known to conduct their work while facing an increased risk for mental illnesses such as depression and posttraumatic stress disorder.

Peer support programs are known to be particularly effective for those dealing with the uniquely challenging emotional situations that first responders routinely encounter. These programs have a strong track record in identifying risk factors for behavioral and mental health problems, reducing stigma and allowing clients to work through personal trauma, and connecting clients with outside support when necessary.

S5407A (Harckham) and A7285A (Burdick) would establish a First Responder Peer Support Program establishing State-level standards, modeled off of the highly successful Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer to Peer Support Program. The legislation would further jumpstart implementation by creating a State-level grant program. Finally, this legislation would protect the personal information of first responders utilizing this service, and create a process to ensure that those needing mental or behavioral health support receive it in a discrete and safe fashion.

In order to ensure that our first responders have the support necessary to deal with these emotionally tumultuous encounters, Westchester urges the passage of S5407A (Harckham) and A7285A (Burdick).

HISTORY

This item is a new request.

2025-26: [S5407A](#) (Harckham)/[A7285A](#) (Burdick)

2023-24: [S7079A](#) (Harckham)/[A7552A](#) (Burdick)  
Passed Senate/ Died in Ways & Means

**Enact State Legislation authorizing Westchester County to Impose Taxes on  
Cash Purchases of Real Estate/Land**

REQUEST

Approve the County's request for the enactment of New York State legislation to permit the County to adopt a modest transfer tax on cash purchases of residential real estate completed without mortgage financing.

JUSTIFICATION

The County requests the enactment of State legislation to permit the County to impose taxes, by the adoption of local laws, otherwise authorized under subdivision (b) of section twelve hundred one of the New York State Tax Law, on the transfer of property within the County, at a rate not to exceed one and a half per centum, where such transfer: (1) does not result in the payment of mortgage recording taxes to the County; and (2) is for property outside of the City of Yonkers.

Under current County law, homebuyers who finance their purchase pay a mortgage recording tax that helps support essential county services. Buyers who purchase entirely in cash do not pay a comparable tax. As a result, two families purchasing similarly priced homes can contribute vastly different amounts to local revenues based solely on whether they require financing.

In practice, this structure places a heavier burden on working and middle class families who rely on mortgages. At the same time, cash transactions have become more common in competitive markets. Aligning the tax treatment of these transactions will provide fairness, fiscal responsibility, and equitable treatment for all homebuyers.

A necessity exists for this enabling legislation because local government does not have the power to enact such legislation by local law.

HISTORY

This item is a new request.

## **Support Workplace Safety for Social Workers (The Maria Coto Law)**

### REQUEST

Support legislation to ensure workplace safety for social workers.

### JUSTIFICATION

The tragic death of 56-year-old social worker Maria Coto in Peekskill, New York, underscores the critical need for enhanced legal protections for Child Protective Services (CPS) workers. On May 14, 2024, while conducting a routine home visit, Maria Coto inadvertently knocked on the wrong apartment door and was brutally attacked. On June 19, 2024, she succumbed to her injuries and died.

This tragic incident highlights the dangers CPS workers face in the line of duty. To address these risks and deter future attacks, it is imperative to establish specific criminal penalties for offenses against CPS workers. Introducing charges such as assault, aggravated assault, and menacing of a CPS worker would acknowledge the unique vulnerabilities associated with their roles and reinforce the state's commitment to safeguarding those who protect our most vulnerable children. Enacting these measures will honor the memory of Maria Coto and ensure a safer working environment for all CPS professionals.

S6986/A7831 would establish the crimes of assault on a child protective services worker, aggravated assault on a child protective services worker and menacing a child protective services worker. S6987A/A7833A would require every city or county social services district to provide a wearable or mobile phone-based panic button to each employee whose job responsibilities necessitate direct interaction with clients in a client's home.

### HISTORY

This item is a new request.

2025-26:     [S6986](#) (Harckham)/[A7831](#) (Levenberg)

Related legislation:

2025-26:     [S6987A](#) (Harckham)/[A7833A](#) (Levenberg)

## **Support Legislation to Limit Utility Costs for Ratepayers**

### REQUEST

Support legislation to limit utility costs for ratepayers.

### JUSTIFICATION

Over the last several years, the Public Service Commission (PSC) has approved multiple significant rate increases for public utilities which have stretched many ratepayers to the limit. For New Yorkers across the economic spectrum, these rate increases are untenable.

To alleviate this burden on families, we ask for support of the following items of legislation:

S1896 (Mayer) / A1028 (Barrett) - Reduce Rate of Return on Equity for Utilities - require regulated utilities to adopt the rate of return on equity and common equity ratio as promulgated by the Public Service Commission by using an updated generic financing methodology when setting final utility rates, which will provide the lowest possible delivery rates for ratepayers.

S3734A (Mayer) - Limit Expenses Utilities Recover from Ratepayers - limit the expenses utility companies can recover at cost from ratepayers, specifically those related to their participation in rate cases and excess employee and executive salaries.

S7693 (Mayer) / A8150 (Barrett) - Ratepayers Receive all Excess Earnings -require gas and electric utilities to return all revenues earned in excess of their authorized rate of return on equity to ratepayers.

S5593 (Mayer) - Rate Compression - address and mitigate the financial burdens placed on consumers due to escalating utility rates and the effects of retroactive rate adjustments (known as "make whole provisions") that occur when rate cases run longer than allowed by statute.

### HISTORY

This item is a new request.

## **Support Legislation Allowing Discretion on Vaccine Guidance**

### REQUEST

Support legislation allowing discretion on vaccine guidance.

### JUSTIFICATION

On January 5, 2025, federal health officials announced they would revise routine childhood immunization recommendations, reducing the current seventeen routinely recommended vaccines to eleven. This announcement has caused confusion for providers and parents with young children in NYS, including here in Westchester. Under the revised immunization schedule, several vaccines that were once universally recommended for all children, such as hepatitis B and meningococcal vaccines, are no longer standard for every child. A hepatitis B vaccination is currently required for children in day care, pre-k, and for school attendance in New York.

Research shows childhood immunizations are highly effective at protecting children from serious diseases and improving overall health. This bill will provide needed clarity and ensure that health care providers in New York State can continue their existing, evidence-based immunization practices. Specifically, the bill would align childhood vaccine requirements in the state with regulations issued by the NYS Commissioner of Health, rather than solely relying on the recommendations of the federal government. The Commissioner would be required to issue such regulations utilizing generally accepted medical standards and based on recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Physicians, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, or other similar nationally or internationally recognized scientific organizations.

### HISTORY

This item is a new request.

2025-26:      [S8853](#) (Mayer)/[A9648](#) (Paulin)

## **Support the Governor's Budget Proposal to Stop Illegal DIY Machine Guns and 3D-Printed Ghost Guns**

### REQUEST

Support the Governor's Budget Proposal to Stop Illegal DIY Machine Guns and 3D-Printed Ghost Guns

### JUSTIFICATION

DIY machine guns are a growing threat to public safety. They are illegal to possess under both federal and state law, but can easily be purchased illegally for as little as \$25 or 3D-printed at home, and can be trafficked easily because they are so small.

Three-dimensional printing is a rapidly growing manufacturing method for people who want to get around New York's strong gun safety laws and illegally make ghost guns and deadly firearm accessories like switches.

The Governor's budget proposal would make New York the first state in the nation to expand its approach to ghost guns by focusing on preventing 3D printers from creating them in the first place. The bill would require manufacturers of 3D printers to equip their products with software that will block the execution of any file designed to make guns, gun components, or illegal gun accessories such as switches and other rapid-fire devices. The proposal would also outlaw the distribution and use of these digital files to or by anyone who is not a state and federally licensed gunsmith.

### HISTORY

This item is a new request.

## **Support the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act**

### REQUEST

Adopt the passage of the ‘Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act’.

### JUSTIFICATION

Dozens of community groups and local environmental leaders have advocated for the passage of the ‘Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act’. This legislation would reduce the proliferation of single-use plastic packaging, save County tax dollars, make packaging less toxic, reduce the amount of packaging material the County must dispose of, and protect public health.

This legislation would generate direct revenue for Westchester County by requiring that companies reimburse local governments for costs incurred in recycling and disposing of packaging waste, and would reduce the County’s costs by reducing the amount of waste we are required to dispose of.

Further, this legislation supports the transition to a clean, zero waste economy; Westchester has worked to facilitate this locally by improving operations at our Material Recovery Facility, developing a countywide food scrap recycling program which local municipalities can opt into, and enhancing operations at our sewer consolidation and waste disposal facilities to minimize the amount of waste generated by these facilities.

As such, Westchester County asks that New York State support the passage of this legislation.

### HISTORY

This item is a new request.

2025-26:     [S1464](#) (Harckham)/[A1749](#) (Glick)

2023-24:     [S4246D](#) (Harckham)/[A5322D](#) (Glick)

***STATE DELEGATION SUPPORT LIST***

Section III

## State Delegation Support List

1. S8597 (Mayer)/A10021 (Cruz): Prohibits children from being denied access to a free public education on account of perceived or actual citizenship or immigration status or the perceived or actual citizenship or immigration status of their parents or person in a parental relationship.
2. S6121 (Meyer)/A7566 (Hevesi): Requires the dissemination of materials regarding child access prevention and the safe storage of firearms.
3. S8656A (Mayer)/A10083 (Rajkumar): Provides that mifepristone or misoprostol may be dispensed without the name and address of the dispenser and patient included on the prescription label.
4. S4126 (Harckham)/A7640 (Burdick): Extends the period municipalities can bond for solar projects from 5 to 25 years to improve financing option.
5. S3972 (Harckham)/A216 (Burdick): Creates DEC Grant Program for PFAS remediation.
6. S270 (Harckham)/A10058 (Levenberg): Provides an exemption from requirements for the alienation of parkland for renewable energy generating projects with a generating capacity not exceeding two megawatts and which are located above real property currently used for vehicle parking.