

# Board of Legislators Meeting Agenda



800 Michaelian Office Bldg.  
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor  
White Plains, NY 10601  
[www.westchesterlegislators.com](http://www.westchesterlegislators.com)

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**Wednesday, December 4, 2024**

**7:00 PM**

**Legislative Chambers**

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## Public Hearing Only

### CALENDAR 25

Please note: Meetings of the Board of Legislators and its committees are held at the Michaelian Office Building, 148 Martine Avenue, White Plains, New York, 10601, and remotely via the WebEx video conferencing system. Legislators may participate in person or via Webex. Members of the public may attend meetings in person at any of its locations, or view it online on the Westchester County Legislature's website: <https://westchestercountyny.legistar.com/> This website also provides links to materials for all matters to be discussed at a given meeting.

Please note: Legislator David Tubiolo will be participating remotely from 7550 Cherbourg Street, Fort Jackson, South Carolina, 29207.

### CALL TO ORDER

### PUBLIC HEARING

1. [2024-576](#) **RESO-PH-2025 Westchester County Budget**

A Public Hearing on the Proposed 2025 Westchester County Budget for Wednesday, December 4, 2024 at 7:00pm, and designating which papers will publish the Notice Public Hearing.

**SUBMITTED BY: COMMITTEE ON BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS**

Speakers \_\_\_\_\_

### ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting: December 9, 2024, at 10 am.

RESOLUTION -2024

TO THE COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS  
OF THE COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER, NEW YORK

**WHEREAS**, the County Charter requires that a public hearing with respect to the proposed 2025 Westchester County Budget be held, at which persons may be heard for or against the items as presented in said Budget or any items thereof, **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that, in accordance with the provisions of the Westchester County Charter, a public hearing be held on Wednesday, December 4, 2024 at 7:00 pm. The County Board will allow participation in the public hearing both in-person and through the Board's Webex teleconferencing system. To register to speak via Webex, please visit this link: <https://bit.ly/4hFDUiz>. **Event number: 2430 054 2295; Event password: 2025Budget** (all one word). Speakers will be called in the order of registration. Speakers who wish to participate by phone, should call 1-844-621-3956. Callers will be interspersed, with in-person speakers at the Chair's discretion. Comments may be submitted in writing by emailing: [BOLPublicHearingComments@westchesterlegislators.com](mailto:BOLPublicHearingComments@westchesterlegislators.com) by 5pm, December 4, 2024. Comments mailed to the Clerk of the Board of Legislators, 148 Martine Ave., 8th Floor, White Plains, NY 10601, must be postmarked by December 4, 2024, and **BE IT FURTHER**

**RESOLVED**, that the *JOURNAL NEWS* (All Westchester Editions), *WESTCHESTER HISPANO* (All Westchester Editions) be and hereby are designated as the newspapers in which to publish the Notice of Public Hearing as aforesaid.

Dated: *November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024*  
White Plains, New York

*Lucy Zeller Jones*  
*[Signature]*  
*Debra Rubin*  
*[Signature]*  
*[Signature]*

**COMMITTEE ON BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS**

Dated: November 12, 2024  
White Plains, New York

***The following members attended the meeting remotely and approved this item out of Committee with an affirmative vote. Their electronic signature was authorized and is below***

Committee(s) on:

**Budget & Appropriations**

Handwritten signature of Colin J. [unclear]Handwritten signature of [unclear]

I am Pat Moran, from Pace Women's Justice Center.

On behalf of all of us at Pace and our clients, I want to thank you, County Legislators, for your past support, and hope that you will continue to support the much needed services we offer.

Briefly, funding from the County helps us provide a legal helpline that receives over 2000 calls a year, legal services for 100 elder abuse victims a year, and a walk-in clinic for abuse victims serving over 600 clients each year. We are also able to provide emergency legal services to victims of domestic violence in the 3 Westchester County Family courthouses. Over 700 hundred persons each year seek our courthouse assistance.

My job at Pace is to manage our three courthouse sites. Our main role at the courthouses is to represent clients seeking emergency orders of protection. But we do much more than that. We often draft custody and child support petitions along with the order of protection papers. We may set up a virtual meeting right at the Courthouse with our Walk-in Clinic, which provides consultations on divorce and other legal matters. We help the client get access to non-legal services, such as safety planning, counseling, and shelter. We connect the client with experienced domestic violence attorneys at Pace or Legal Services of the Hudson Valley for continued legal representation. Given our

courthouse presence and the quality of our services, it is not unusual for us to get a call from judge's chambers requesting us to get involved in a pro se case before them.

At Pace Women's Justice Center, our clients are men, women and non-binary people of all ages, ethnicities, cultures and immigration status. Domestic violence impacts people from all over our County. We partner with many County agencies, including Office for Women, Probation, Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, the Domestic Violence High Risk Task Force and the DA's Office, who refer clients to us and vice versa. These partnerships enable each agency to maximize its effectiveness in protecting highly vulnerable County residents.

We are often a lifeline for those who have nowhere else to go. The staff and attorneys here spend countless hours providing free legal services to victims of domestic violence in our County and the need is endless. Our clients, the survivors, are people who need legal assistance to move forward and overcome the trauma they have had to endure.

We are so very appreciative of your continued support and ask that you please make sure to include continued funding for <sup>Pace</sup> PWJC in the budget for 2025 so we can continue the essential work we do.

Thank you all for spending time here with us tonight

My name is Dawn Meyerski and I am the Executive Director of Mount Kisco Child Care Center, the Co-President of the Westchester Early Childhood Directors Association, member of Empire State Campaign for Child Care and Non-Profit Westchester. *and a Leadership Westchester Grant*

I have been coming to these meetings for more than 25 years, first as a teacher, then a program director and now as executive director. My job has evolved over all those years and throughout it all, I have always been impressed by the commitment that Westchester makes to child care. My cohorts in other parts of the state, are also blown away by this commitment.

While I know that we are facing challenging times, I must ask that you hold on to that resolve.

The Alice Report released by the United Way this year states that the survival threshold for a family of 4 in Westchester is \$101,000 annually. And while close to 40% of Mount Kisco residents fall under that threshold, there are many who are just above it.

We came here tonight prepared to ask you to add \$250,000 to the Westchester Works budget. While that is something we continue to hope for, we have just been told that there is a looming cut. It is imperative that you ~~restore~~ *for* the \$1.65 million ~~being cut from~~ *remain in* the Westchester works budget. This funding is a lifeline for the families who receive it.

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry should be supported by a valid receipt or invoice. This not only helps in tracking expenses but also ensures compliance with tax regulations.

In the second section, the author provides a detailed breakdown of the company's revenue for the quarter. It includes a comparison between actual performance and the budgeted figures, highlighting areas where the company exceeded expectations and where it fell short.

The third section focuses on the company's financial health and liquidity. It analyzes the current cash flow and identifies potential risks that could impact the company's ability to meet its short-term obligations.

Moving on to the fourth section, the document outlines the company's strategic goals for the upcoming year. It details the key initiatives that will be undertaken to drive growth and improve operational efficiency.

The fifth section discusses the company's human resources strategy. It highlights the need for continuous learning and development to keep the workforce up-to-date with the latest industry trends and technologies.

Finally, the document concludes with a summary of the key findings and recommendations. It reiterates the importance of strong financial management and strategic planning in achieving the company's long-term vision.

Without the Westchester Works funding stream those families will simply not be able to meet the high cost of child care. Westchester works supports the EMERGING middle class. As they are finally beginning to rise out of poverty, the loss of this funding will cut them off at the knees and perpetuate the cycle we are working so hard to break. They will have less expendable income to spend in our towns and villages and will continue to struggle to survive.

There has been a lot of discussion about Child Care being on the precipice of collapse, and I can assure you that little has changed to solve this problem. The cost of care is beyond what parents can afford, we are pricing ourselves out of the market with high tuition and we can not recruit or retain staff because we cannot afford to pay the teachers what they are worth. Most are at or slightly above minimum wage. The minimum wage increase in January is going to cripple many Centers and is not nearly enough to retain teachers. We implore you to link arms with us to advocate for workforce compensation at the state level.

Thank you for your time.





Good evening. My name is Dylan Pyne and I'm the proud Senior Director of Development at Volunteer New York!. Volunteer New York!'s mission is to mobilize our community to address its greatest challenges.

We envision a community that is vibrant, resilient, and equitable and see volunteerism and civic engagement as essential strategies to achieving this vision.

We are also proud members of Nonprofit Westchester and the Westchester Women's Agenda.

We all know that Westchester County is full of generous individuals who give their time and talents, and nonprofits that fulfill critical needs. However, bringing them together can be challenging. For almost 75 years, we celebrate our 75th anniversary next year, Volunteer New York! has been creating the pathways that turn our communities' good intentions into action.

Last year, thanks to our generous supporters, including Westchester County, Volunteer New York! inspired over 35,000 volunteers who contributed 457,000 hours of service to support more than 300



local nonprofits at a value of over \$16.9 million to our community.

Through all our programs, we connect individuals to causes, communities, and each other, fostering a sense of direction, purpose, and belonging. As the challenges facing our society become more complex, volunteerism serves as both a solution and a bridge—bringing together diverse individuals to address urgent needs in a way that strengthens the fabric of our community.

With your ongoing support, Volunteer New York! can continue to connect our neighbors with nonprofits who, through people power, can advance their mission and expand their impact, making it easier for individuals to get off the sidelines, get involved, and make a difference. I want to thank you for your support of this year's Budget and also urge you to consider adding your own additional support so that we can continue to invest in our community and in volunteerism. Help us continue to nurture the community's collective good.

Thank you.



**Good Evening,**

**Honorable Members of the Board of Legislators,**

My name is Monica Spears and I am the Director of Development for Girls Inc. of Westchester County.

**Tonight, I stand before you on behalf of the Westchester Women's Agenda (WWA) representing** our nearly 50-member nonprofit organizations and 100 individual members to request a vital 5% increase in the 2025 County budget allocation for WWA members. This funding increase is essential for sustaining the lifeline of services that provide care, support, and employment to thousands of Westchester residents, especially women and families in our County's under-resourced and marginalized communities.

We know the indispensable role these nonprofits play in protecting the health, safety, and well-being of our county. The member organizations of WWA address urgent needs spanning from domestic violence support, housing assistance, legal services, and healthcare access - to educational programs for youth, job training, and affordable childcare.

These nonprofits not only lift up your most vulnerable constituents, but their programs also strengthen our local economy by offering stable employment and services that enable women to thrive in the workforce.

This 5% increase is essential for several pressing reasons:

**Growing Demand for Services:** Community needs are rising. The aftermath of the pandemic has amplified social and economic inequities, creating unprecedented demand for these services. Rising living costs, increased housing instability, and persistent inflation have placed intense strain on nonprofits that are already stretched thin.

**Rising Operational Costs:** Nonprofits face soaring operational expenses, from rent and utilities to the fair wages needed to retain skilled, dedicated staff. This 5% increase is necessary to ensure the continuity of high-quality, impactful services.



Current funding levels are no longer enough to cover rising costs, and without additional support, many organizations may be forced to reduce or eliminate critical programs serving the people you represent.

**Economic Stability and Community Resilience:** Our member nonprofits are not just service providers; they are economic engines in Westchester County. By maintaining their sustainability, your 5% investment will help protect thousands of local jobs, ensuring steady, uninterrupted support for tens of thousands of County residents. Supporting these organizations means investing in the economic resilience and prosperity of our entire community.

**We respectfully request that the Board of Legislators consider this 5% increase not as a simple budget adjustment, but as a necessary investment in the future stability and well-being of Westchester County. With this funding, our community's nonprofits can continue their mission of service, ensuring that our most vulnerable residents - and indeed, our entire county - receive the support they need to thrive.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Before I go I would also  
 like to say thank you  
 to all of you and the Rest of our  
 Counties legislators,  
 those of us in the non-profit space  
 know that you work diligently for  
 all of the counties Residents and  
 on behalf ~~of~~ all of the NWA  
 member nonprofits - we would like to  
 thank you for all you ~~do~~ <sup>do</sup> on behalf of all the  
 counties citizens





Good evening, I am Major Mike Sheridan, United States Army Retired. I am still a Citizen of this great Republic, I have never been convicted of felony, and I am considerably older than 21 years of age. When last I had the opportunity of addressing your <sup>HIGHNESSES</sup> Lordships, I was commenting on your ridiculous plan of further egregiously infringing on lawful firearm owners through your proposal to impose extortionate fees for those enjoying the exercise of their rights under the Constitution. Now I do realize you all may have been blinded by the dollar signs in your eyes, or deafened by the sound of a cash register, in your pursuit of the funds necessary to run your overly complex programs, so I'm here tonight to recommend your adoption of a revenue generating tax levy.

If you will recall, my earlier proposal had the short title of "Shall Issue, for any law-abiding adult Citizen, for five bucks", which I still strongly recommend you to adopt. I now further suggest that you adopt a different proposal with a short title of "Fifty cents for Freedom". Fifty cents per month, per household. That's six dollars each year, per household in the County. And you would be assessing it against each and every household in which NOBODY in that house has one of your firearm permission slips.

The cost of administering such a levy should be minimal. Since every household in the County is theoretically only minutes away from a conscientiously patrolling peace officer, you could delegate the collection of the monthly fee to the local cops. That's right, send a cop around, knocking on each door, to collect fifty cents each month (or six dollars for a whole year), from each household where the citizens can not PROVE that they are willing to provide for some measure of their own safety.



I would think that folks would be happy to see the cops showing up on their doorsteps to collect a monthly fee. In any case, it is certainly no more insulting or impertinent or obnoxious or un-Constitutional than the lengthy intrusive paperwork and questioning that current firearm permission slip holders undergo. Of course, those householders who could produce one of your permission slips would be exempted. And since I know you folks love showing up for Veterans Day Parades, you could also exempt anyone who could produce a DD-214 form showing an Honorable Discharge, or alternatively, a military retiree ID Card.

With the flood of revenue this proposal will generate, the Westchester County Department of Public Safety could easily cover the supposedly extensive costs of running their current licensing circus. They would probably have enough left over to actually focus on "Public Safety" by offering free classes on topics such as "Firearm Handling and Storage" and "Why we as a County have militarized our Police Forces".

In summary, I again urge you to adopt my earlier proposal with the short title of "Shall Issue, for any law-abiding adult Citizen, for five bucks".

With that in place, you might even win a lawsuit in front of the Supreme Court. I now further urge you to adopt my companion proposal in order to generate the funding you so desperately appear to be trying to extort. Adopt a measure along the lines of "Fifty cents for Freedom", and the good Citizens of the County who are unwilling to buy a firearms permission slip from you will at least be contributing SOMETHING towards their own safety and protection.

I would think that the way to go is to have the copyrighting up on their behalf to collect a royalty fee. In any case, it is certainly not more difficult to "revert" or "reclaim" an uncopyrighted than the copyrighting process and questioning that current situation. The publisher will have to pay for the copyrighting process, but you could pay down over your period of time with a reasonable loan. Since I know you like to know up for various day forward you can do that. I am not going into detail but a 1031 form showing an investment in real estate or other assets is a very common way to do it.

With the fact of copyright and proposal will involve the publisher. Copyrighting is a very costly and costly way to copy and copy and a large cost of running the entire licensing effort. They would probably have enough left over to actually for the "little extra" by offering the license on a basis such as "limited" or "exclusive" and "first" as a County have obtained the Patent Office.

In summary, you are going to have to pay for the copyrighting and you are going to have to pay for the copyrighting and you are going to have to pay for the copyrighting. Will the fee be on a 1031 form or will it be on a 1031 form? I am not sure but you can do that for copyrighting process in order to protect the funding you are dependent upon to be "right" and to think a reason why the fee of "1031 form for Patent" and the "1031 form" of the County who are willing to pay it. The "1031 form" will be used to pay for the copyrighting process and the "1031 form" will be used to pay for the copyrighting process.

**I'm still not clear on exactly WHY you still think I should feel an actual need to ask your permission to exercise a right I already have; but I will still offer you ten bucks to leave me alone for ten years. And if you're really still that hard up for cash, send the cops to collect fifty cents every month from everybody else.**

**You can continue to pretend that you're grudgingly granting me permission to exercise a right I already have, and I'll continue pretending that you're not already egregiously infringing on every law-abiding adult Citizen. Print me up a permission slip that's good for ten years, and go milk the folks who couldn't be bothered.**

**Thank you for your time.**

I'm still not clear on exactly what you still think I should do for the  
need to ask your permission to continue a right I already have. But I will  
still offer you the guide to leave me alone in a few years. And if you're  
ready and that's all right for you, and the code is correct, I'll leave every  
month from everybody else.

You can continue to pretend that you're struggling through the  
our reason to exercise a right. I always have, and I'll continue to understand  
that you're not already exercising a very low-riding right.  
Of course, I'm not up to a standard, and that's good for you. And in  
with the folks who would like to be there.

Thank you for your time.

Westchester County Board of Legislators

Public Hearing on Finance Fees

November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 7:00pm

Public Community Center, Ossining, NY



**Westchester County Board of Legislators**

**Public Hearing on License Fees**

**November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 7:30pm**

**Caputo Community Center, Ossining, NY**

Good evening. My name is Margaret Käufer, and I'm here today on behalf of The STEM Alliance to request continuation of funding - a \$691,000 request - for Connect Westchester in the County 2025 budget. *We ~~are~~ are a WVA member*

Westchester's digital divide impacts over 120,000 residents in our County. Our data shows that 92% of these individuals do not own a computer, 54% do not have affordable, reliable internet, and 58% lack basic digital skills, such as sending an email or completing online forms. This digital inequity prevents people from accessing essential services like telehealth, workforce development, online learning, and even applying for jobs. *Also and support the Budget Assoc. requ*

To address this urgent need, Connect Westchester has deployed a team of trained Digital Navigators, providing wraparound digital inclusion services that have already reached 540 residents in 78% of all Westchester municipalities. Our program is countywide, and we are committed to serving every corner of Westchester, wherever the need arises.

The success of our work is clear. Our clients report the following impact: 78% of our clients use their new devices and skills to access reliable medical information, 74% are saving money by finding discounts on essential goods, 71% have improved their workforce skills, and 60% are starting or marketing small businesses. Our partnership model is built to multiply impact, as we collaborate with over 20 different locally based nonprofit partners, groups like Padres Hispanos, Lifting Up Westchester, and Mount Vernon Public Library, to integrate our digital equity services into their local programs.

Funding Connect Westchester doesn't just help The STEM Alliance — the work strengthens these organizations and allows them to better serve their communities with our specialized assistance. Furthermore, these continued investments will help position Westchester to leverage millions in federal and state funds that will be made available in 2025. Connect Westchester is a digital equity trailblazer - we need to keep capacity high so that our applications for these monies will be viewed favorably.

In 2025, we plan to provide computers and basic skills training to at least 640 residents, and expand internet access to an additional 160 clients. We will also continue partnering with county workforce programs like Launch1000 and the Healthcare Talent Pipeline Program with Westchester County Association.

Before closing, I want you to hear from your constituents. Here are 2 stories:



- *First, Gloria, Age 55 from Yonkers I feel really comfortable using the Internet since I took the class. I'm able to go on and look up just about anything and I also purchase stuff. I'm very grateful for the class and also that ability to manage my doctor's appointments. It makes my life so much better. - Gloria, Yonkers, Age 55*
- *Second, hear from Stephen, age 39 in Somers - "The training provided by the program has been immensely beneficial. Currently, I am pursuing an online cybersecurity course offered by Coursera, which will result in a professional certification. This course has been a pivotal factor in my decision to engage in online learning. The use of my laptop has become an integral part of my daily life. I attribute a significant part of this positive change to the program's staff, whose support was instrumental in equipping me with the necessary confidence and tools to embrace new opportunities and strive for an improved quality of life. - Steven, Somers, Age 39*

Thank you for your consideration of this request. By supporting Connect Westchester, you are creating equal access to digital tools and skills - this is not charity; this is equity through urgently needed social services.. We look forward to continuing this critical work with your support.



## Talking points for County Budget Hearing, 11/14/2024

- My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a board member of the Ossining Children's Center. I joined the board because I believe strongly that the care and education of our youngest children is crucial for a healthy community and – ultimately -- a healthy economy.
- Our mission at the Ossining Children's center is to serve all working families in our diverse community.
- First – I want to thank you for supporting the Westchester Works Child Care Scholarships. This program has put Westchester on the map as a place that values and supports all working families.
- The Westchester Works Scholarship makes child care tuition assistance available to families who earn too much to qualify for a Department of Social Services child care subsidy, but who still can't afford the full cost of care.
- This scholarship program has been a great help to many working families; – without the scholarship <sup>they</sup> would have had to put their children in substandard care.
- We have learned that the Westchester Works Scholarship is going to be cut in half. The families on this program need it. If they lose their scholarships, as of January 1, they will have a heart-breaking decision to make (which unlicensed babysitter will they entrust their children to.)
- The families on the Westchester Works Scholarship program need it. And there are <sup>even</sup> more working families in need of this program. We are asking that the County – not just maintain the Westchester Works Scholarship program at its present level – but ~~to~~ increase it by \$250,000.
- We don't ask the County taxpayers to bear this responsibility alone. As the board of a not-for-profit child care center, we solicit donations from our very generous community to enable us to serve all working families. We work

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very hard to raise hundreds of thousands of charitable dollars every year to meet the child care needs of our community. I don't see how we can work any harder, or how our donor community can dig any deeper.

- Many families want to relocate to Westchester, but they can't afford it because child care is so expensive. The average tuition for an infant in child care in Westchester is \$20,000. Who can afford that on top of a mortgage payment, and all of the other normal household expenses?
- I urge you to renew the full funding of the Westchester Works Child Care Scholarship program, and to consider an increase of \$250,000 to enable more working families to have their children in high quality child care.



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Alcance Latino, Inc.  
 346 S. Lexington Ave.  
 White Plains, NY 10606  
[www.AlcanceLatinowp.com](http://www.AlcanceLatinowp.com)

November 1, 2024

Dear County Executive Latimer and County Board of Legislators:

Alcance Latino, Inc., a Domestic Not-For-Profit 501(c)(3) Corporation, is writing to request \$270,000 in funding for the 2025 fiscal year to continue serving the critical needs of the Latino & Immigrant populations in Westchester County, while also providing emergency assistance to migrant families and individuals relocating to Westchester from the U.S. Southern Border. Our mission is to provide services and programs which enhance and sustain the quality of life for the migrant and marginalized populations in Westchester County. The English translation of "Alcance Latino" is "Latino Outreach".

In fiscal year 2025, more than 15,000 persons are projected to be recipients of Alcance Latino programs, services, and partnerships. This projection follows 13,000 persons served in 2024, and 10,000 persons served in 2023. To meet the needs of the growing Latino and Migrant populations in Westchester County, Alcance Latino Inc. has expanded to occupy the entire 12,000 square foot space of the St. Bernard Community Center building at 346 South Lexington Avenue, White Plains, New York, to carry out its office, educational, and charitable outreach programs. Community Partnerships with STEM Alliance, BOCES Southern Westchester, Feeding Westchester, Droste Mental Health Services, MVP Health Services, LUCA, and White Plains Hospital allow us to offer a vast spectrum of services that are vitally important to marginalized and migrant populations.

Over the past two years, Alcance Latino has served the needs of tens of thousands of migrants and marginalized persons largely through the efforts of community volunteers and limited budgets. As we move forward into 2025, Alcance Latino needs public funding from Westchester County to sustain our outreach services and maintain partnerships with the aforementioned not-for-profits organizations, who rely on our 12,000 square foot facility to offer their programs.

Alcance Latino ESL and Computer Educational Programs teach poor & under-served migrants to communicate in the English language and through computer technology, which facilitates the processes of assimilation and transition into a new life in Westchester County. After completing our programs, clients can apply to apply to college, create resumes, receive mental health counseling sessions via zoom, receive medical care, find employment/housing, and register to vote.

Through Alcance Latino, food provisions are distributed to over 700 families per month through a partnership with Feeding Westchester. Moreover, MVP Health Care Service Representatives and SNAP (Food Stamps) representatives meet weekly in our offices with low-income families and individuals who need financial assistance with health care and/or who struggle to feed their families on limited budgets.

To offset unemployment and poverty in Westchester County, Alcance Latino publishes a weekly listing of jobs and apartments to help migrants and unemployed persons secure work and adequate housing. Literally, hundreds of migrants visit our office every week to obtain these listings. We also manage a Thrift Shop onsite that sells furniture, household items, clothing, shoes, children's items, and toys at very affordable prices, so low-income families and migrants can obtain basic necessities for living. If it happens



that a family is not able to afford clothing and basic household items, Alcance Latino offers these items for free.

This past year, Alcance Latino launched a Summer Camp which provided recreational, creative, and educational opportunities for children in White Plains to offset the depression and isolation many children experience in the summer months when their parents work. Funding from Westchester County will enable Alcance Latino to offer 2025 Camp Scholarships to children whose parents cannot afford the tuition. Other child enrichment programs are offered throughout the year which include after-school tutoring programs, an Alcance Latino Girl Scout Troop, Chess Group, and Crochet group.

We urge you to include Alcance Latino in this year's County Budget. Without this assistance we will not be able to provide these critical programs and maintain our partnerships with other Not-For-Profit Organizations who also provide critical help to marginalized persons in Westchester County.

Sincerely,



Rev. Robert J. Morris  
Executive Director

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$\frac{d}{dx} \frac{1}{x^2} = -\frac{2}{x^3}$



## Westchester County Budget Hearing Testimony – October 14, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you tonight.

In the summer of 2021, we asked the Latimer Administration to fund a child care scholarship program because we wanted to help people get back to work, without big child care bills as a barrier.

With a \$3.3 mil contract with Westchester DSS, the Council launched Westchester Works in 2022, now in its third year. Participation has steadily grown:

- 482 children in 2022, 565 in 2023 and 583 children as of yesterday
- Applications come in year round, with 155 applications processed last month
- There are close to 15,000 Westchester children with both parents working, who are income-eligible for Westchester Works
- Scholarships generally cover about half the cost, or \$8,400 annually
- With center-based infant care averaging over \$25k, parents still have a sizeable child care bill
- Recipients come from all over the County, parents work in a variety of industries, with healthcare at the top of the list.
- The mean income of two-person families with awards is around \$79,000

Two years ago, the income cap for Child Care Assistance was 200% FPL. NYS raised the cap twice to get to the federal max, roughly 350% FPL. Westchester DSS is budgeting a record \$78 mil for child care in 2025, as its Child Care Assistance program, funded by state and federal dollars, has grown exponentially, and that's great news, but not the proposed 50% cut to Westchester Works.

The Child Care Assistance income cap may work well in Chemung County, it doesn't work in Westchester. Without access to Westchester Works, a single parent with a child who earns \$75,000 annually faces a child care bill approaching 25% of family income, all alone.

The problems with child care are national in scope and way beyond the means of Westchester County to fully address. That has never been our expectation. We believed that Westchester Works would be rendered obsolete by the eventual passage of President Biden's Build Back Better Bill, which promised child care assistance for families up to 250% of state median income. But that didn't happen and there is no expectation that the Trump administration will propose anything comparable. It is more and more difficult for young families to live here; Westchester Works delivers hope and help to young families that we need to keep.

We had actually requested an increase of \$250k for next year to meet growing demand. We urge you tonight to restore funding to Westchester Works, as an investment not just in working families but also in our economy.

Regardless of the outcome of this particular budget, Westchester County remains a leader when it comes to child care. We thank both the Administration and the Board of Legislators for all you have done over the years.



**From one 2024 Westchester Works recipient:**

*"Good day, my 2 children, Lina (3.5) and Orion (9 months) are both in daycare thanks to this Scholarship. Without the scholarship, there would be no way for myself, as a single mother, to both work and have my children watched out for. This scholarship allows me to be able to pay my mortgage, taxes, the balance of daycare and be able to feed my children at the end of the day. It's been life changing, life-saving and truly given us a second chance at a better life that we otherwise would not have had. Being a single mother is hard enough without having to worry about if, my child will be somewhere safe and taken care of. Thank you for making this scholarship possible!" – A single parent from Ossining who works at a law firm.*



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<b>Westchester County Children Under Age 13 with Working Parents</b>					
Source: ACS 1-Year Estimates Public Use Microdata Sample 2021 Weight used: PWGTP					
<b>Employment status of parents (ESP) - All Available Parents Working for children Under Age 13</b>	<b>300% to 400% FPL (Currently Eligible for Scholarship)</b>	<b># Children 350% to 400% FPL</b>	<b># Children 401% to 450% FPL</b>	<b># Children 451% to 500% FPL</b>	<b>Total # Children 350% to 500% FPL</b>
-> Total -> Total Westchester County (Northwest) PUMA, New York	2,967	1,484	377	1,276	3,137
Living with two parents: Both parents in labor force	1,039	520	314	927	1,761
Living with father: In labor force	0	0	0	0	0
Living with mother: In labor force	0	0	0	51	51
-> Total -> Total Westchester County (Northeast) PUMA, New York	1,376	688	457	389	1,534
Living with two parents: Both parents in labor force	878	439	457	214	1,110
Living with father: In labor force	40	20	0	0	20
Living with mother: In labor force	392	196	0	0	196
-> Total -> Total Westchester County (Southeast) PUMA, New York	3,111	1,556	875	142	2,573
Living with two parents: Both parents in labor force	761	381	611	142	1,134
Living with father: In labor force	119	60	0	0	60
Living with mother: In labor force	205	103	0	0	103
-> Total -> Total Westchester County (Central)-- White Plains City PUMA, New York	1,640	820	349	846	2,015
Living with two parents: Both parents in labor force	914	457	204	579	1,240
Living with father: In labor force	0	0	0	0	0
Living with mother: In labor force	278	139	0	113	252
-> Total -> Total Westchester County (Southwest)-- Yonkers City PUMA, New York	3,461	1,731	293	2,361	4,385
Living with two parents: Both parents in labor force	2,047	1,024	53	1,270	2,347
Living with father: In labor force	310	155	0	971	1,126
Living with mother: In labor force	428	214	0	56	270
-> Total -> Total Westchester County (South Central)--New Rochelle & Mount Vernon Cities PUMA, New York	4,214	2,107	1,642	3,079	6,828
Living with two parents: Both parents in labor force	1,632	816	369	2,804	3,989
Living with father: In labor force	365	183	378	0	561
Living with mother: In labor force	1,186	593	0	0	593
<b>Total Kids Under 13 with All Parents Working</b>	<b>10,594</b>	<b>5,297</b>	<b>2,386</b>	<b>7,127</b>	<b>14,810</b>



**Mt. Vernon United Tenants, Inc.**



Mail: P. O. Box 2107 ~ Office: 2 Gramatan Avenue - Suite 304 ~ Mt. Vernon, N. Y. 10551

Phone (914) 699-1114 ~ Fax (914) 699-7449

Email: [mvut@erols.com](mailto:mvut@erols.com) ~ Website: [www.mvut.org](http://www.mvut.org)

**Westchester County Board of Legislators (W-BOL)**  
**on Thursday November 14, 2024 by Dennis Hanratty, Executive**  
**Director of Mount Vernon United Tenants (MVUT)**

Good evening, members of the Westchester County Board of Legislators (W-BOL) and others assembled here. My name is Dennis Hanratty and I am the Executive Director of Mount Vernon United Tenants (MVUT.) I believe it's important to state upfront that MVUT is the **ONLY** funded and staffed tenants' organization in Westchester County. MVUT has an over forty-year (40+) history of providing principled services to tenants in Mt. Vernon and throughout Westchester. While our office site in Mount Vernon makes us easily accessible for Mount Vernon tenants, for others throughout the County we're merely a telephone call away. Our long history has created a broad understanding of MVUT's ability to help to respond to, and to solve various landlord/tenant issues.

Our services fall under three (3) broad programmatic categories:

**Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP)**

Under our HPP we engage in various activities to prevent tenants from becoming homeless. In addition, under our case management system we deal with hundreds of individual landlord/tenant cases on a wide variety of issues – building services; lease questions; landlord harassment.etc.

**Tenant Action Project (TAP)**

Through our TAP we assist tenants in learning their rights and forming effective tenant associations within their buildings.

(over)

## Policy Advocacy (PA)

Through our PA we work with other organizations, coalitions and individuals to address public policy positions on tenants' rights and ~~affordable housing~~.

All of our work is focused on improving the quality of life and affordability for tenants in Mount Vernon and throughout Westchester County. MVUT has always done all of its work and provided all of its valuable services on a "bare bones" budget. Westchester County has been an essential partner with MVUT in the delivery of our program services. This partnership must continue and should be increased to help us to reach, and assist even more deserving tenants. We're asking for a minimum of \$130,000.00 in the upcoming budget. Westchester County's "investment" in MVUT sees a huge return in savings via a reduction in emergency shelter costs. This is both a major tax savings to Westchester County taxpayers, and just as, if not more importantly, a life-saving win for those tenants whose evictions are prevented ! They are spared the indignity of becoming homeless.

Housing affordability continues to be perhaps THE most intractable problem facing the County. MVUT works day-in, day-out addressing this problem on an individual and policy basis. It's more important than ever for you, the Westchester Board of Legislators to continue to strengthen that relationship, reduce homelessness and provide tenants throughout the County with the assistance they need and deserve. Support MVUT !!

Thank you !

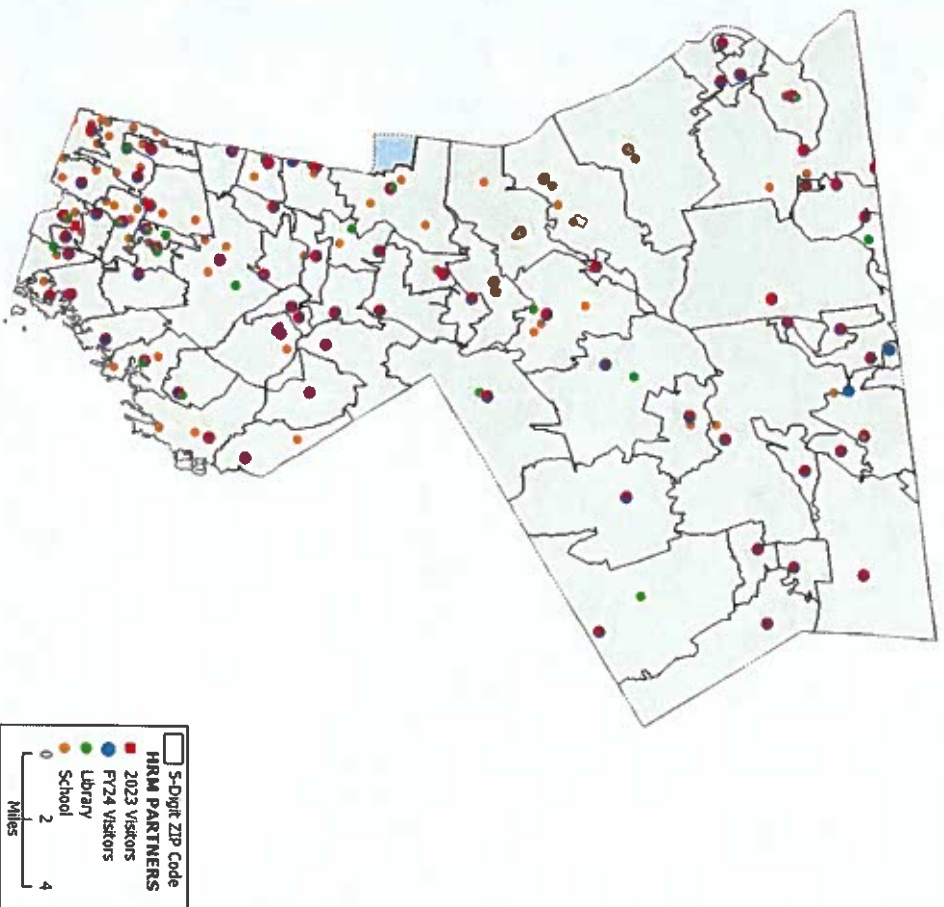
HUDSON  
RIVER  
MUSEUM

# Scope of Service Westchester County 2025 Addendum

# Impact

## Westchester County Visitors and Partners

Spread of Visitors across the County, as well as ninety-six Westchester School and Library Partners covering all seventeen County Legislative Districts.



# Impact

## Westchester County School and Library Partners by Legislative District

District 1—Collin Smith  
Field Library  
John C. Hart Memorial Library  
Lincoln Titus Elementary School  
Peekskill Middle School  
Water Parnas High School

District 2—Erika Pierce  
Bedford Hills  
Bedford Hills Free Library  
Increase Miller School  
Katonah Elementary  
Mount Kisco Public Library  
Mouth to Hand Parent Association  
Pound Ridge Library  
Somers High School  
Somers Intermediate School

District 3—Margaret Cunzio  
Hawthorne Elementary School  
Mount Pleasant Public Library  
North Castle Public Library  
Pleasantville High School  
Pocantico Hills  
W. L. Morse Elementary School

District 4—Vedat Gashi  
Chappaqua Public Library  
Grafton Elementary  
Oak Lane Child Care Center  
Rounding Brook Elementary School  
Somers School

District 5—Benjamin Boykin II  
Edgewood Elementary  
Elizabeth Seton Children's School  
Mamaroneck Elementary School  
Scarsdale Public Library  
District 6—Nancy Barr  
Harrison Public Library  
Port Chester-Rye Brook Public Library  
Rodge Street School

District 7—Catherine Parker  
Mamaroneck Avenue School

Mamaroneck Public Library  
Milton School  
Resurrection School  
Westchester Day School

District 8—Jewel Williams  
Dixon Primary School  
Greenburgh Public Library  
Hackley School  
Warner Library

District 9—Emiliana Ulaj  
Biscaroff Manor Public Library  
Brookside Elementary School  
Clearview School  
Cotton Free Library  
Cossaring Public Library  
Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School  
Roosevelt Elementary School

District 10—Judah Holstein  
Eastchester Public Library  
New Rochelle Public Library  
The Waverly School  
Tuckahoe Public Library

District 11—Terry Clements  
Colonial Elementary School  
Jefferson Elementary School  
Town of Pelham Public Library

District 12—David Imamura  
Dobbs Ferry Public Library  
Greenburgh Early Childhood Program  
Hastings Public Library  
Inverton Public Library  
Main Street School  
Seely Place School  
Springhurst Elementary School

District 13—Tyrae Woodson-Samuels  
Amari Public Charter School  
Mount Vernon City School District (multiple schools)  
Mount Vernon Public Library  
Our Lady of Victory School

District 14—David Tubiolo  
Homeschoolers Tribe of Westchester County  
Sarah Lawrence College  
School 17  
School 30  
St. John the Baptist School  
Yonkers Montessori Academy

District 15—James Nolan  
Bronxville Public Library  
Casimir Pulaski School  
Creswood Library  
Eliza Corwin Frost School  
Kantil Gibran School  
Patricia DiChiara School  
Roosevelt High School  
The Chapel School  
Tuckahoe High School  
Westchester Hills School 29  
Yonkers Grinnon I. Will Library

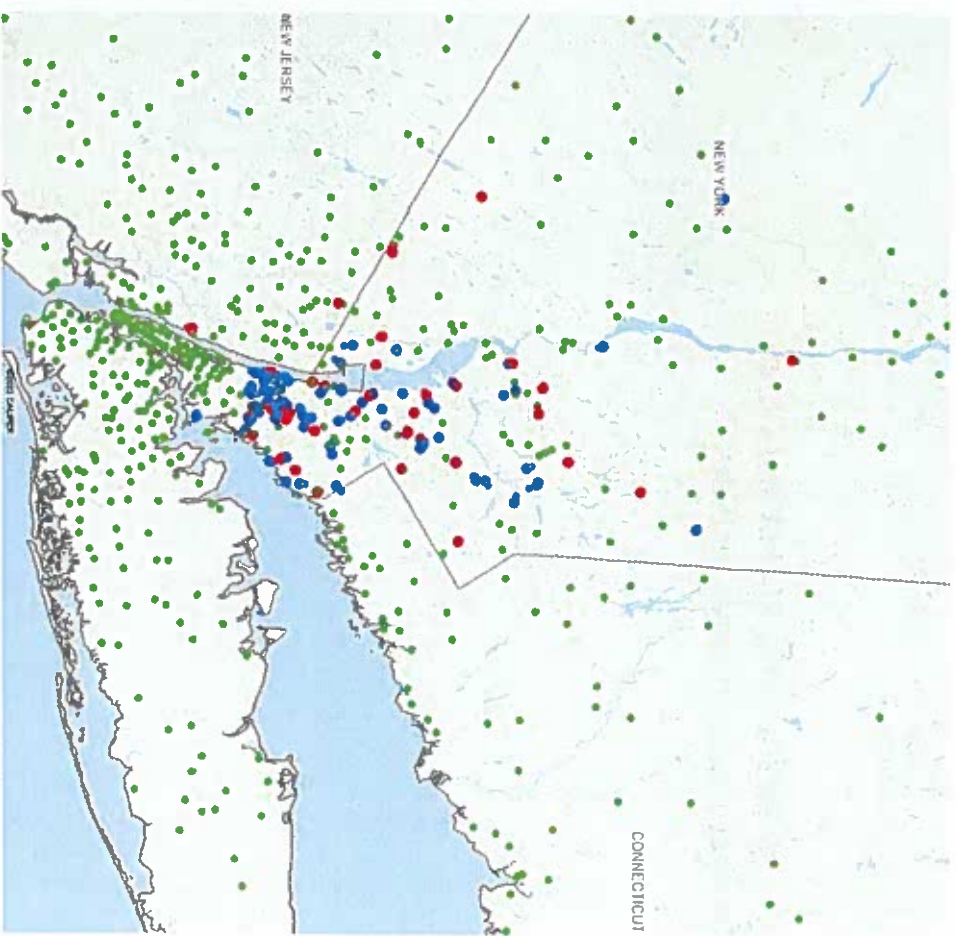
District 16—Shanae Williams  
Charter School of Educational Excellence (CSEE)  
Gorton High School  
Museum School 25  
Sacred Heart Grade School  
Sacred Heart High School  
School 16  
School 5  
VIVE in America  
Yonkers Riverfront Library

District 17—José Alvarado  
Enrico Fermi School  
Hosbos School  
Pearls Hawthorne School  
Yonkers Middle High School



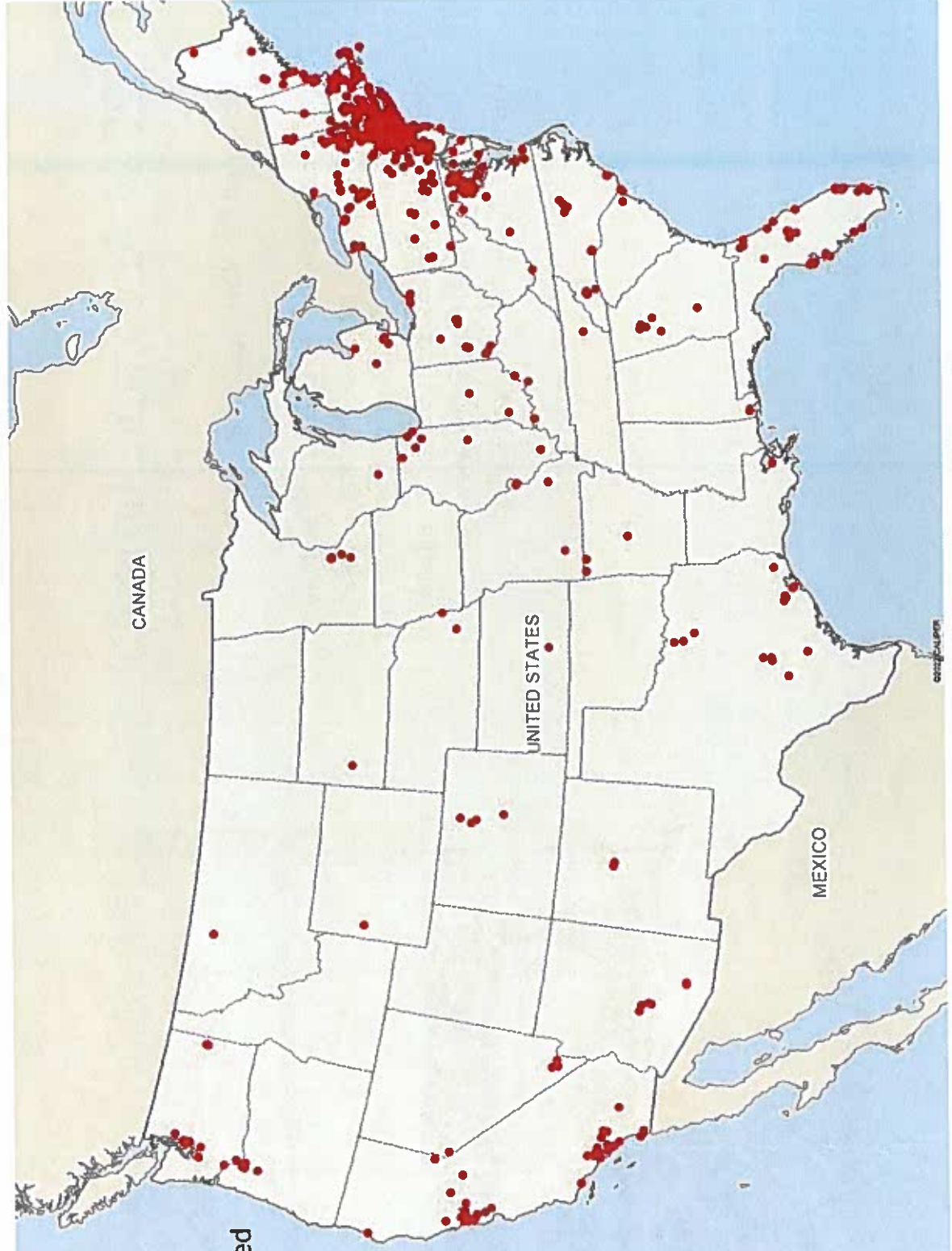
# Impact

Partnering with **schools** and **libraries**, and welcoming **visitors**, from throughout the tri-state region.



# Impact

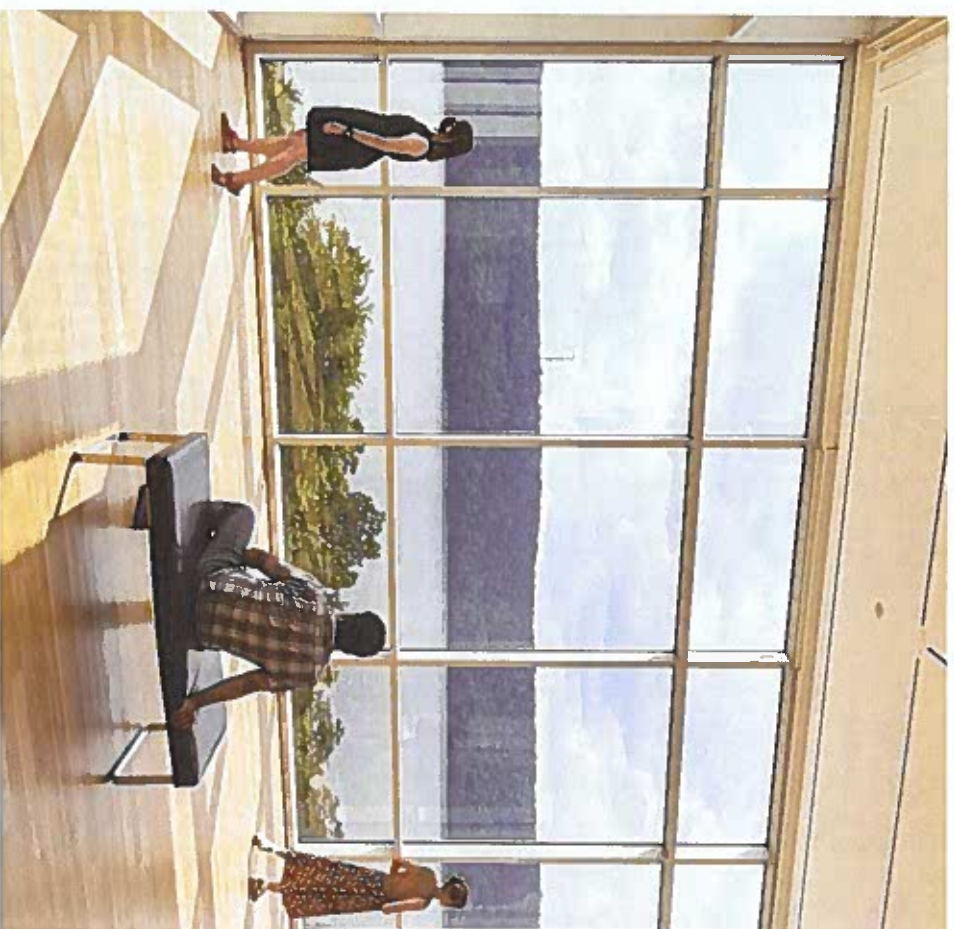
In 2023, the HRM welcomed more than 73,000 visitors from 43 states including 1,003 zip codes.



# 2024 Accomplishments

## Activated the New West Wing

The unveiling of the West Wing has stimulated more than a 30% increase in visitation. This state-of-the-art building has strengthened and continues to expand our position as a place to see world-class art and iconic views in Westchester and the Hudson Valley!



## 2024 Accomplishments

### Total Solar Eclipse

HRM brought the 2024 eclipse experience to Westchester! Yonkers native and former NASA astronaut Ron Garan, together with our planetarium programs, attracted 600+ visitors and was an inspiring moment for the HRM Junior Docents. In conjunction with MarketNY/ESD.



# 2024 Accomplishments

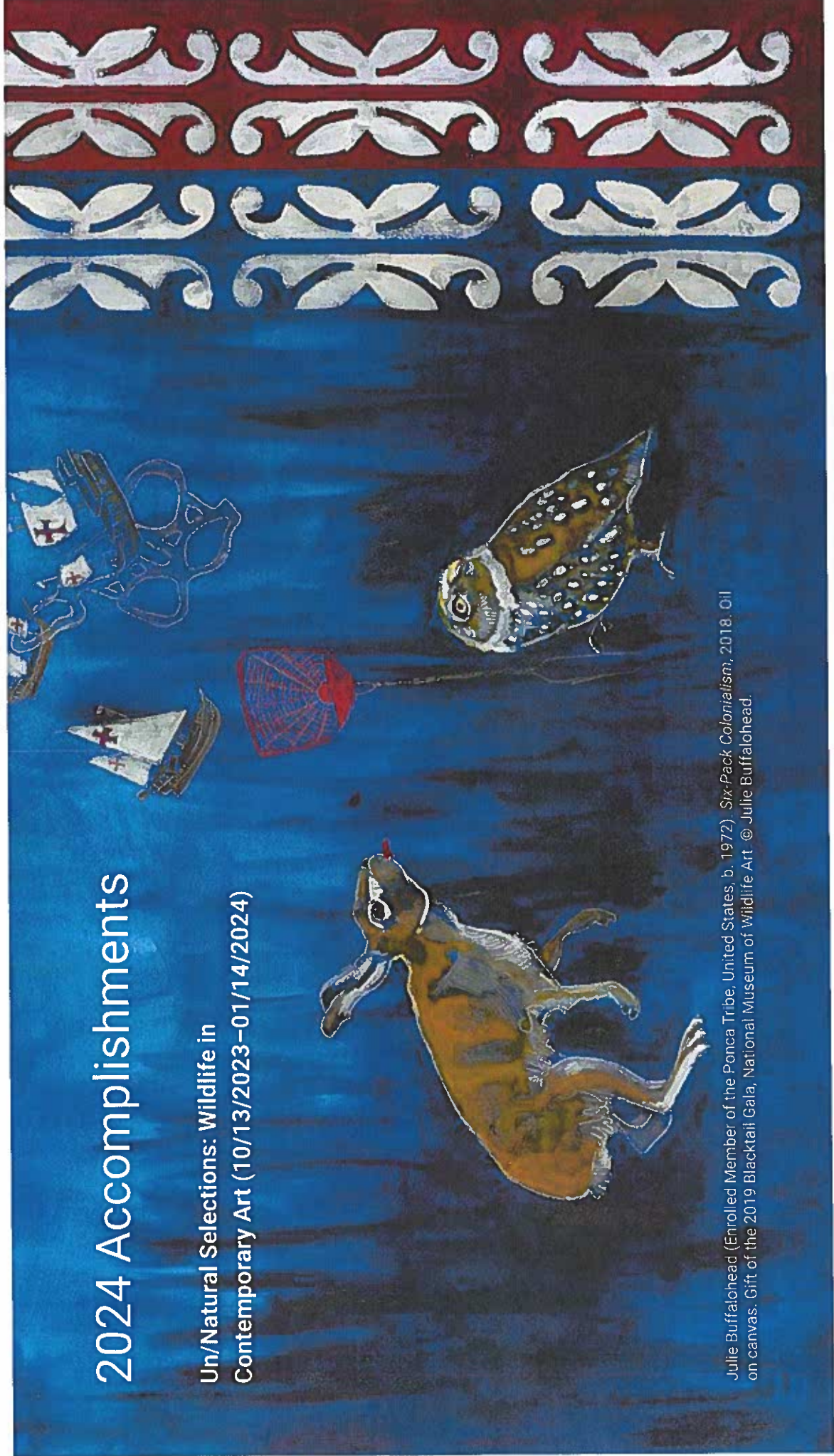
## Collection Digitization

- \$125,000 IMLS matching grant
- Correcting historical underrepresentation and erasure
- Ensuring that the history of our vibrant community is accurately documented
- By the end of 2025, the Museum will publish 8,000+ collection images on our website—a staggering 4,300% increase in accessibility.
- Raising private funds to match this grant.



# 2024 Accomplishments

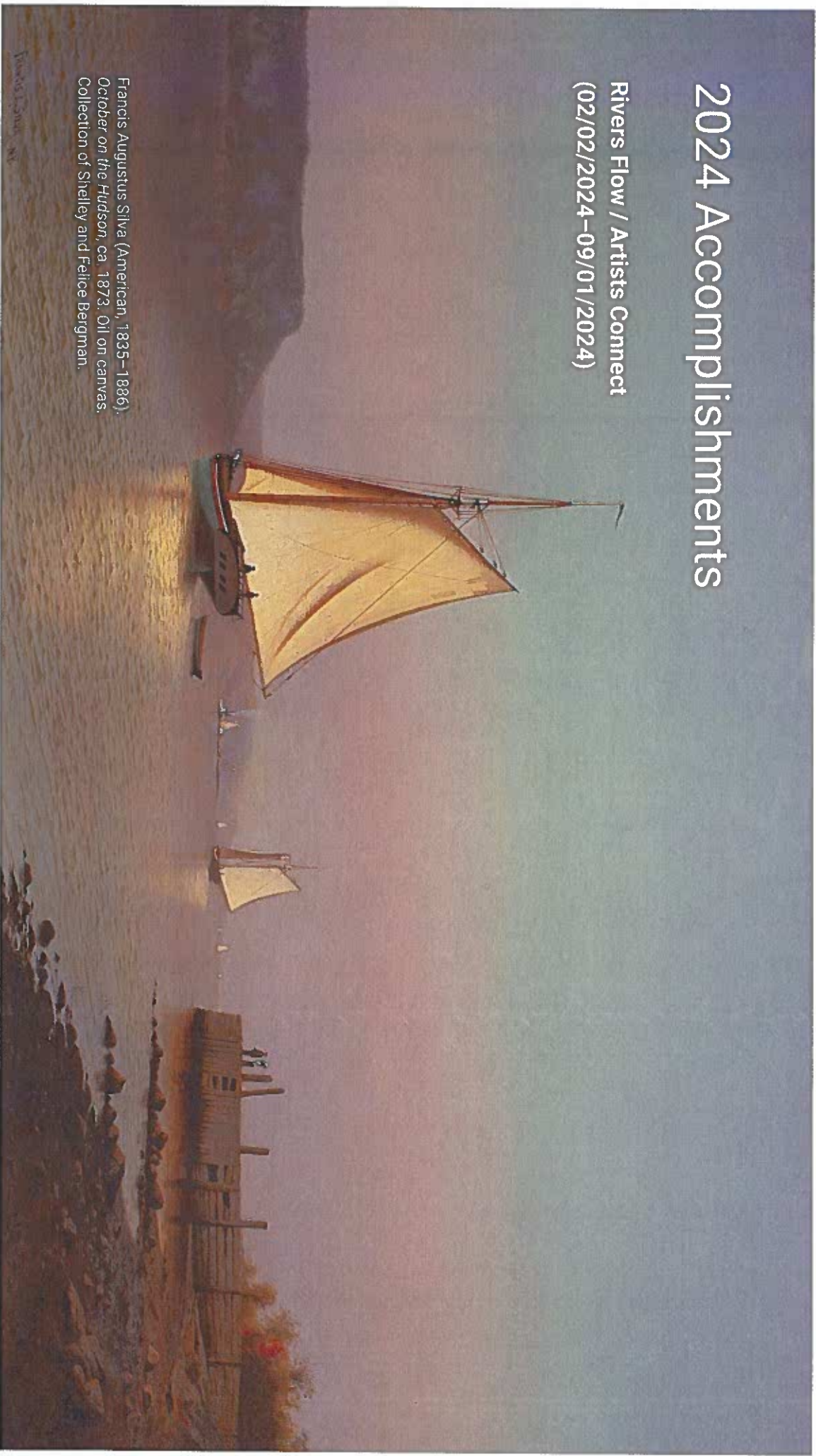
Un/Natural Selections: Wildlife in  
Contemporary Art (10/13/2023–01/14/2024)



Julie Buffalohead (Enrolled Member of the Ponca Tribe, United States, b. 1972). *Six-Pack Colonialism*, 2018. Oil on canvas. Gift of the 2019 Blacktail Gala, National Museum of Wildlife Art © Julie Buffalohead.

# 2024 Accomplishments

Rivers Flow / Artists Connect  
(02/02/2024–09/01/2024)



Francis Augustus Silva (American, 1835–1886),  
*October on the Hudson, ca. 1873*, Oil on canvas,  
Collection of Shelley and Felice Bergman.

Francis Augustus Silva, NY

## 2024 Accomplishments

**Neighboring Visions: Westchester Artists Then and Now (06/07/2024–09/29/2024)**

A first-time partnership with the Bronxville Historical Conservancy, the Mellon Foundation, and Sarah Lawrence College.

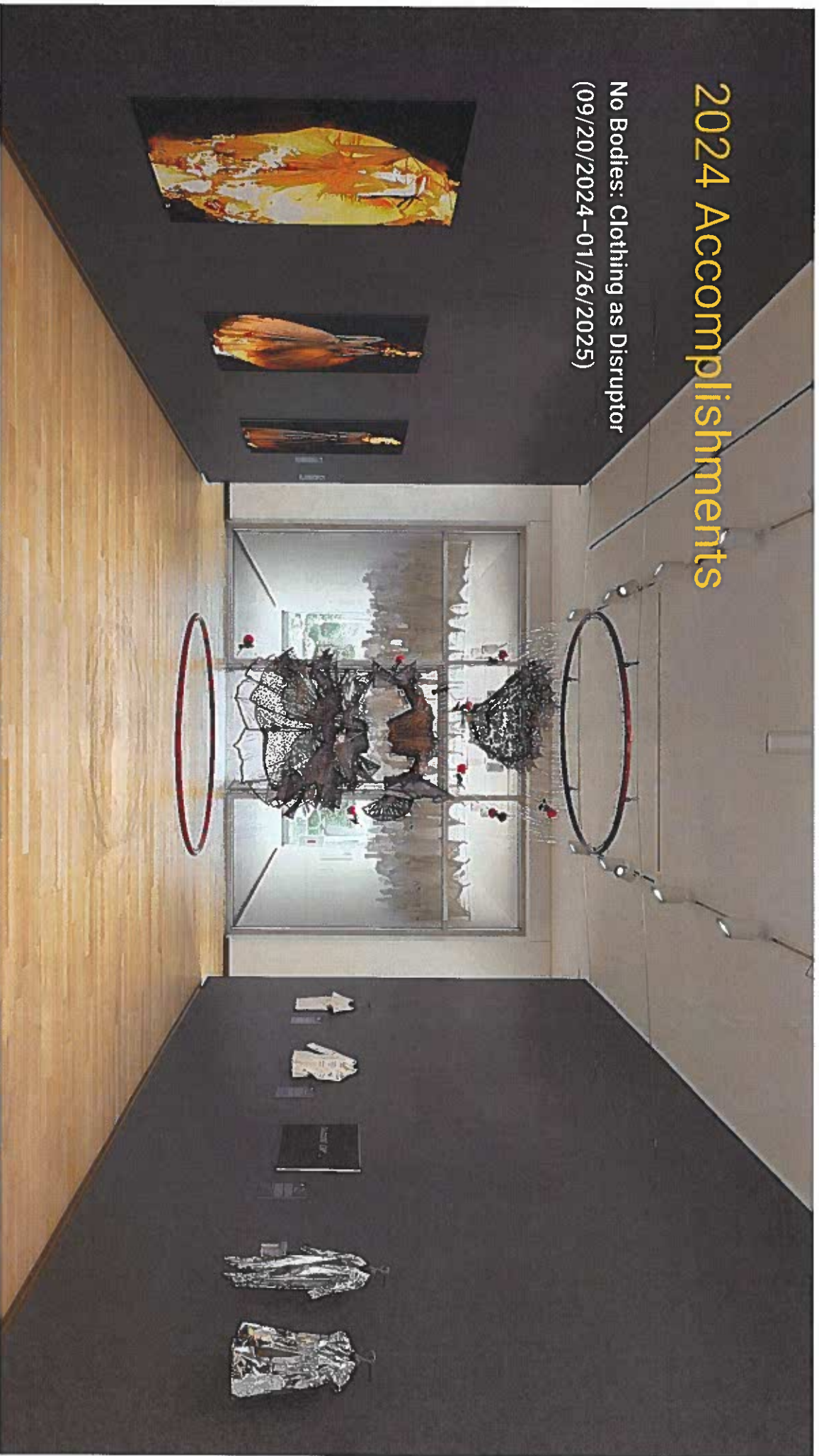
William Thomas Smedley (American, 1858–1920). *Seated Woman with Parasol*, early twentieth century. Oil on panel. Collection of the Bronxville Historical Conservancy.





# 2024 Accomplishments

No Bodies: Clothing as Disruptor  
(09/20/2024-01/26/2025)



## 2025 Scope of Services

**Smoke in Our Hair: Native Memory and Unsettled Time (02/14/2025–08/31/2025)**

This will be the first exhibition in the Museum's 105-year history to explore memory and time through a uniquely contemporary Native lens. 51 artworks, made from 1965–2024, are drawn from acclaimed collections of Gochman Family Collection, Art Bridges, and the Forge Project.

Putting Westchester on the map!

Rachel Martin (Tlingit/Tsaagweidel, Killer Whale Clan, of the Yellow Cedar House (Xaai Hit) Eagle Moiety). *Love is a tide is a taste is a seed is a tree*, 2024. Archival colored pencil on archival paper, collage masks. Courtesy of the Gochman Family Collection.



# 2025 Scope of Services

## 30 Years of the Junior Docent Program

Recognized for excellence by the White House, HRM celebrates 30 years of nurturing young leaders of the future. 100% of our graduates from the program have gone on to college.

This year, Junior Docents from across the country will reunite at HRM to share college and career advice with a new generation.



# 2025 Scope of Services

## Cultural Celebrations That Welcome All

### Lunar New Year

Music, dance, art, and crafts  
735 visitors in one day

### Native American History Month

Social dances representing tribes from  
across America

### Hispanic Heritage Month

Rhythmic musical traditions

### Black History Month

Spoken word and jazz

### Women's History

Women-led Ballet company immersed  
audiences in movement, music, and art

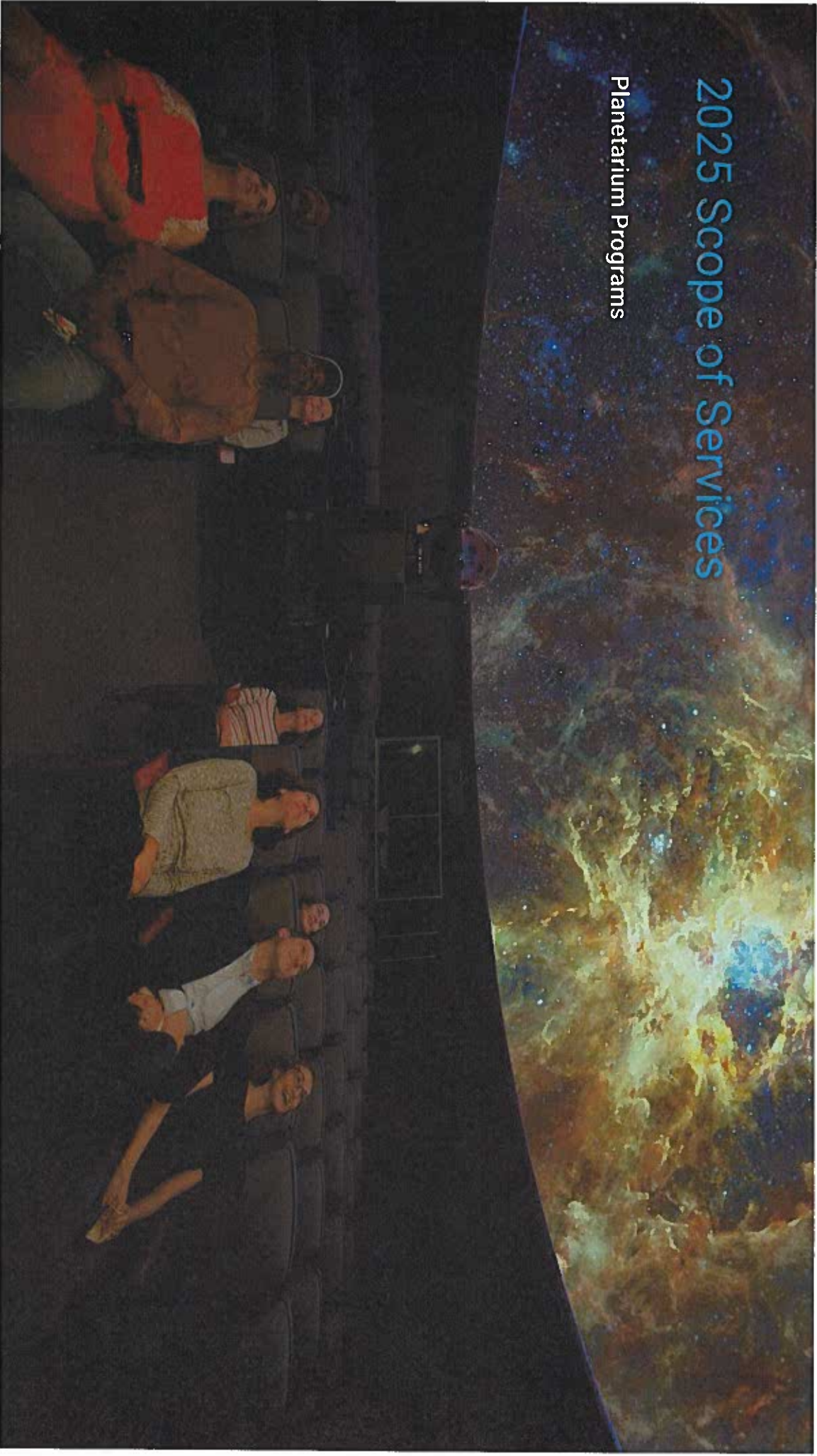
### Pride Month

Joyful entertainment and artful celebration  
of our LGBTQ+ community



# 2025 Scope of Services

## Planetarium Programs



# 2025 Scope of Services

## Environmental Science & Social Justice

- Hands-on workshops that connect the natural environment to daily life
- STEM sustainability design challenges
- Citizen science & ecological monitoring programs

Pictured: HRM Senior Manager of Science and Planetarium Programs Marc Taylor discussing tree identification with visiting School 5's 4th graders participating in HRM's Carvel Partnership.



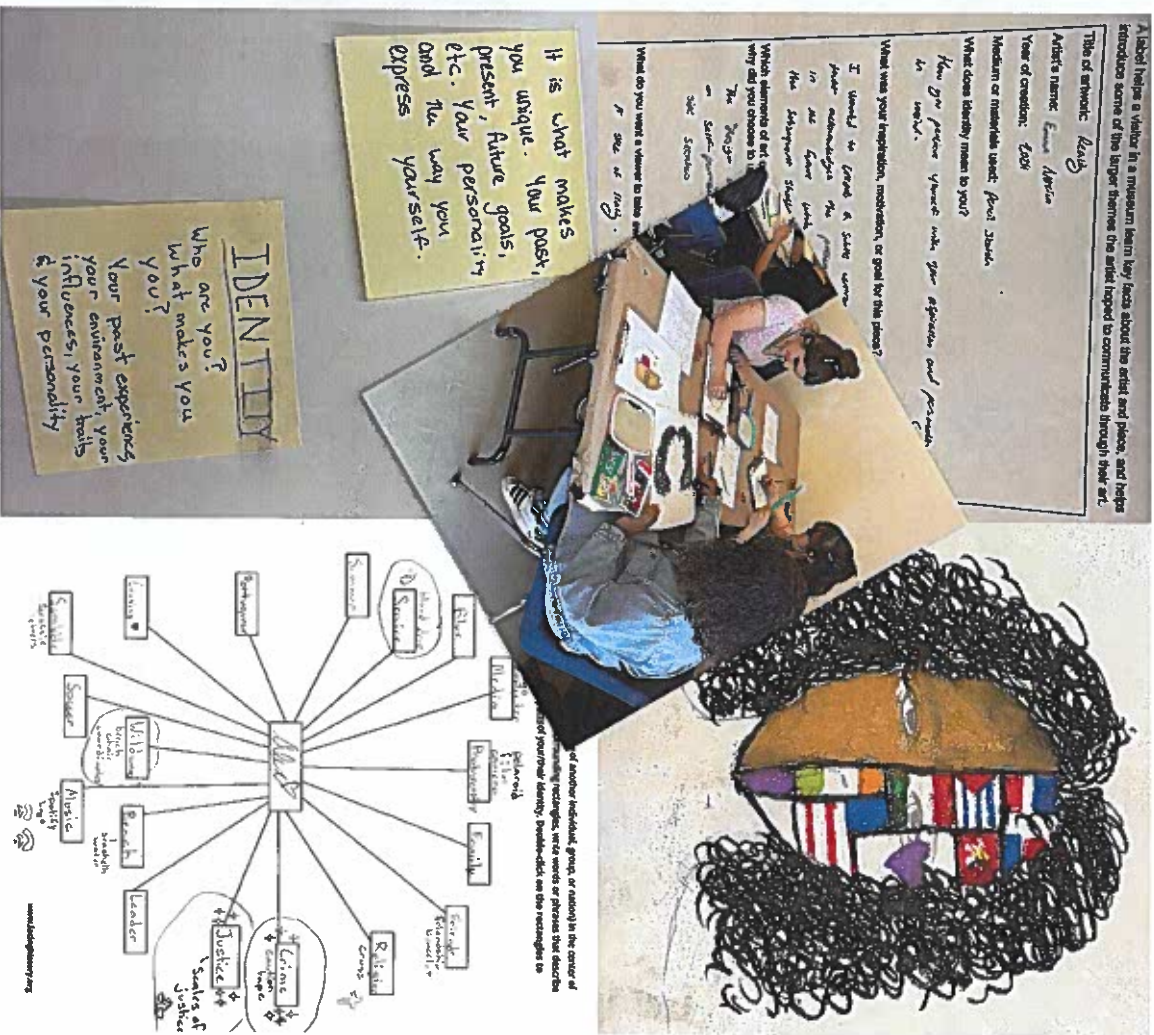
# 2025 Scope of Services

## School Visits and Partnerships at the HRM

Engage students of all ages in art, history, and science through interdisciplinary, experiential, inquiry-based tours, planetarium shows, and workshops.

Ensure social emotional learning, literacies, critical thinking, and problem solving skills are accessible to learners at all developmental levels through multiple entry points and modalities.

Students participated in HRM's *Portraiture and Identity* program. Following a gallery tour focused on portraits, students made their own identity charts in the workshop from which they created a divided self-portrait in which one side shows how the world sees them vs. how they feel/think of themselves on the inside.



# 2025 Scope of Services

## Community Partnership: Museum Docents

- Personalized lifelong learning experience for all ages, and from all communities
- Insight and passion that engages diverse visitors
- Fosters multigenerational connections and strengthens community ties





# HUDSON RIVER MUSEUM

The Hudson River Museum deeply appreciates County Executive George Latimer, Deputy Director Ken Jenkins, and each member of the Westchester County Board of Legislators for considering this funding request.

Your support enables us to continue our mission-driven work and expand our impact across the region.

***We invite all to experience the best of our country, right here in our County.***

**STATEMENT TO WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS  
2025 COUNTY BUDGET – PUBLIC INPUT SESSION  
11/20/2024**

**Greenburgh Library, 300 Tarrytown Rd, Elmsford NY 10523**

Good evening, I am Rebecca Senn, Co-Executive Director of the Housing Action Council (HAC).

Housing Action Council provides technical assistance to not-for-profit organizations, affordable housing committees and municipalities to develop affordable housing and to facilitate land use policies that support the development of affordable housing. We assist organizations to evaluate sites, assemble development teams, obtain local approvals, secure public and private financing, and manage the development process. We help communities determine local and regional housing needs, educate the public and identify appropriate land use tools that support affordable housing.

On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors of the Housing Action Council, I would like to express our thanks to the County Executive and the Board of Legislators for their past and ongoing support for affordable housing, including financial support for our technical assistance program. These funds address the need to expand housing opportunities for low-and-moderate-income households, including populations with special needs **throughout** Westchester. It has enabled Housing Action Council to facilitate the development of over 300 housing units over the first 8 months of 2024. County funding has also fostered and supported Westchester's local housing committees and community-based nonprofits, including organizations like the Port Chester Affordable Housing Task Force, The Preservation Company in Peekskill, the Blue Mountain Housing Development Corporation in Bedford and housing committees in the River Communities who play an integral role in advocating, designing policy, developing housing and educating residents on the need for and benefits of affordable housing.

We ask for your continued support for Housing Action Council, and as a proud member of the Westchester Women's Agenda, we support the Agenda's position for a 5% increase in support for HAC and the other WWA agencies that address critical needs of our most vulnerable populations, including economic empowerment, health, legal, immigration and child care. We also thank the County Executive for including an additional \$50 million in the Capital Budget for affordable housing and ask you as Legislators to continue that support.



Thank you for the opportunity to speak today, and thank you for supporting families like mine by funding the Family Service Society of Yonkers (FSSY). As a parent, this agency has truly been a lifeline for me and my children.

I work in Queens, and as a single parent, it's not always easy to find the right support for my kids. But thanks to the free after-school program that FSSY provides, I have peace of mind knowing my children are in good hands. My son receives extra tutoring through the Reading Buddies After-School Program, where he gets the academic support he needs, especially in reading. Reading is so important, and having someone guide him, expand his vocabulary, and help him connect with stories in real-life scenarios has been a huge benefit.

Over the summer, he participated in the Summer Reading Buddies program, which gave him the chance to spend his days learning, reading, and doing projects with other children his age. For a working parent like me, that's a relief, because I couldn't afford the cost of a typical summer camp. But with this program, I know he's engaged and growing.

FSSY is more than just after-school and summer programs—they provide a holistic experience for the whole family. We attend weekend events where for example we've enjoyed traditional foods from different countries, done arts and crafts representing those cultures, events like the one with Winnie the Pooh Friendship day, the new year party and many more. These events always carry important messages about cultural awareness, friendship, acceptance, and diversity.

As a parent, I've also benefited from FSSY's monthly workshops. I've learned how to recognize the difference between normal worries and anxiety in me and my children, how to really listen to them, and how to manage their screen time, just to mention some. FSSY addresses not only the academic needs of our children but also their emotional and social well-being. And as parents, we feel truly supported.

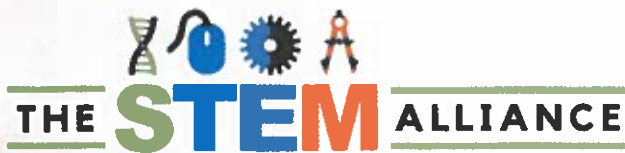
I am not speaking just for myself today. I have spoken to hundreds of parents who participate in these programs, and they share the same feelings of gratitude. I am simply the voice of many parents who deeply appreciate the support we receive.

Thank you again for funding this agency and for continuing to invest in the well-being of families in our community.

Samantha Alva

Las Hermanas Mirabal Parent





*Creating a network of STEM learning opportunities*

November 20, 2024

Honorable Members of the Board of Legislators,

My name is Mary Grace Pagaduan, and I am the Managing Director of Resource Development for The STEM Alliance. As a proud resident of Westchester County for over 50 years, I have dedicated my career to working with community-based organizations that serve our most vulnerable and marginalized populations.

Today, I stand before you as a representative of the Westchester Women's Agenda (WWA), a coalition of nearly 50 nonprofit organizations and over 100 individual members, to advocate for a vital 5% increase in the 2025 County budget for nonprofit organizations focused on uplifting women and families.

This funding increase is not just a request—it is a necessity.

Nonprofit organizations are the backbone of our community, providing essential services that protect the health, safety, and well-being of Westchester residents.

WWA member organizations address critical needs, including domestic violence support, housing assistance, legal services, healthcare access, educational programming, job training, and affordable childcare. These programs directly impact women and families, creating opportunities for stability and growth while strengthening the social and economic fabric of our county.

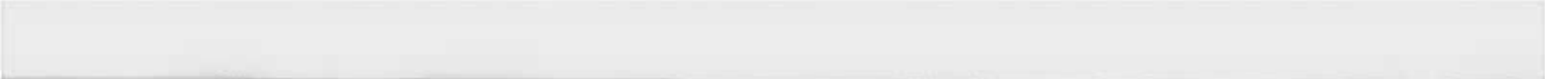
The need for this 5% increase is urgent and multifaceted:

1. The ongoing effects of the pandemic have deepened social and economic inequities, driving unprecedented demand for services.
2. Rising living costs, housing instability, and inflation have placed additional strain on nonprofits already stretched to capacity.
3. Nonprofits face escalating expenses, from rent and utilities to fair wages needed to retain skilled staff. Without additional funding, many organizations will be forced to cut back or eliminate programs critical to the constituents you represent.
4. Nonprofits do more than provide services—they fuel our local economy by creating stable jobs and enabling women to participate fully in the workforce. A 5% increase in funding will protect these jobs, sustain critical programs, and ensure the long-term resilience of Westchester County.

This increase represents an investment in the future stability and prosperity of our entire community.

I urge you to prioritize this funding in the 2025 budget to safeguard the lifeline of services that thousands of Westchester residents depend on every day.

Mary Grace Pagaduan  
 Managing Director, Resource Development  
 The STEM Alliance  
 mpagaduan@thestemalliance.org





Susan Kramer <skramer@greenburghlibrary.org>

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Hi,

1 message

---

Pamela Vizcarra <pvizcar1@gmail.com>

Wed, Nov 20, 2024 at 6:20 PM

To: skramer@greenburghlibrary.org

Hi,

My name is Pamela Veloz and I'm the mother of the boy that was running the budget room. His name is Maximilian and he is the recipient of the Westchester Council scholarship. I found out about the scholarship when I was almost at my breaking point. I was working and bringing my child to work from 1 to 4 pm. At the beginning my boss was really accommodating, but then he grew impatient. I didn't have any other choice. My mom could only watch him until 1 and we couldn't afford child care. I felt like I was failing like as an employee and as a mother as mistakes would happen on a daily basis. I was also working extra hours after Max would go to sleep sometimes until 1 in the morning just to catch up. I was a walking zombie. When I found out about the scholarship, it saved me. I was able to focus on work at work and in my child when I picked him up from daycare. We still paid for some of the tuition, but it was not an amount that we could not afford. If we can't get the scholarship next year, I will most likely have to quit my job. I can't do both and I'm not sure how we would make it. I am sure I'm not the only one. There are so many parents with the same struggle. Please help. Support us to be able to contribute to the economy and to be able to support our children.

Thank you.

Pamela   
Vizcarra







**Mt. Vernon United Tenants, Inc.**

2 Gramatan Ave., Suite 304, Mt. Vernon, NY 10550  
914.699.1114 | mvut@erols.org | www.mvut.org

November 20, 2024

Good morning County Executive Latimer, County Legislators, and fellow citizens of Westchester County:

My name is Genevieve Roche, I reside in Hastings-on-Hudson, and I have spent 35 years as a tenant advocate – including seven years as a Tenant Representative on the Westchester Rent Guidelines Board and as a tenant rights attorney; and now as head of Operations and Finance for Mount Vernon United Tenants (“MVUT”). I am also testifying as a member of Nonprofit Westchester -- a vital resource for the County’s nonprofits that provides invaluable professional development, education, and advocacy for what we do.

MVUT is a grassroots community-based organization that has been providing effective counsel and assistance to the County’s tenants for close to forty years. The assistance we provide in close partnership with the County is more important than ever as the lack of affordable housing continues to escalate. The number of rent-regulated apartments in the County had declined more than 30% from a one-time high of about 80,000 units to fewer than 25,000 units today. More than 85% of those units are in the neediest communities of Mt. Vernon, Yonkers and New Rochelle. Housing development takes time and lots of money; preserving affordable housing and keeping tenants in their homes is a no-brainer.

Since the end of the pandemic eviction moratorium and the expiration of federal ERAP assistance, MVUT has been fielding more requests for assistance than ever. Without adequate additional funding, we cannot afford the necessary staff and overhead resources we desperately need to serve the people of Westchester County. Such funding will pay for itself multiple times over by saving tax dollars that would otherwise need to be expended to support homeless housing and services. It is an investment that reaps tremendous gains for all of Westchester’s citizens.

MVUT respectfully requests that a **minimum of \$130,000** be included in the County’s 2025 budget so that this organization, that works so closely with the County, can continue to serve the ever-increasing number of its tenants seeking our assistance to, among other things, address rental arrears; prevent evictions; and enforce tenants’ statutory rights regarding lease renewals, repairs, maintenance, and harassment. In addition, through our programs we work with tenants to help organize their buildings so they can self-advocate, and we also perform important public advocacy work (e.g., right to counsel, good cause eviction).

The need is particularly acute this year as the affordable housing crisis deepens. Per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, had MVUT’s funding since 1992 merely kept pace with inflation, it would be receiving upwards of \$145,000. I urge you in the strongest terms to please allocate a **minimum of \$130,000** to fund the ongoing work MVUT performs partnering with the County to keep residents in their homes during an escalating housing crisis.

Respectfully,



Genevieve Harris Roche  
Director of Operations and Finance  
914.255.6793 | ghroche@gmail.com





### **CRC Statement- Voz y Vida Domestic Violence Program funding**

Good evening, my name is Liseth, Senior Case Manager at the Community Resource Center, a proud member of Nonprofit Westchester and the Westchester Women's Agenda. At CRC we advocate for and empower predominantly Latino and Hispanic immigrant, and low-income communities facing challenges such as limited education, underemployment, inadequate housing, food insecurity, and immigration issues.

In the past year, the CRC has seen an uptick in cases related to domestic violence. We believe this is the result of a community that is still healing from the pandemic and the financial instability due to job losses, increased substance abuse, and cultural factors that can influence the prevalence of domestic violence.

**As a result, CRC is committed to addressing this issue through the continuation of our Voz y Vida, its Domestic Violence Prevention Program, and for which it is seeking continued funding from the county in the amount of \$100,000.**

Through culturally sensitive services, CRC has built trust, enabling domestic violence survivors to reach out for help. A continued contract with the county will support our Family Advocate, working closely with Case Managers to connect clients to crucial services, and addressing staffing constraints for crisis intervention, safety planning, advocacy, court accompaniments, support groups, and referrals. With our assistance, survivors not only regain control over their safety but also access educational, job training, and legal services, creating a holistic approach to rebuilding their lives.

I would like to share the story of our survivor Diana, a courageous single mother from Colombia who arrived in Mamaroneck, NY, in June 2024 with dreams of a brighter future for herself and her 10-year-old daughter. Leaving behind her home country, she sought safety and opportunity, initially believing her former partner could provide them with a stable life. However, her reality quickly turned dark. What began as a promise of security transformed into a nightmare of mental, verbal, and psychological abuse. Her partner's controlling nature stripped Diana of her independence, isolating her and subjecting both her and her daughter to relentless humiliation.

After a harrowing incident of domestic violence, Diana found herself trapped in fear, threatened with harm and deportation if she dared to leave. She sought help from a person at the Mamaroneck Library, who referred her to Voz y Vida at CRC for assistance.

Diana walked into our office in tears, carrying only a few bags of her belongings. The Voz y Vida team sprang into action, providing immediate support and shelter for her and her daughter. After several attempts, they secured a safe place to stay. Diana was connected with essential services and counseling. The voz y vida team also assisted her daughter with school enrollment and doctor's appointments. The Voz y Vida team's effort provided Diana with safety and hope. Diana is grateful for the critical support provided, and she looks forward to participating in support groups and programs that would help her healing.

## CRC Statement- Workforce Development funding

Good evening, my name is Mariana Espinoza and I represent the Community Resource Center. Our organization is dedicated to empowering and advocating for the immigrant and low-income communities of Westchester County. CRC is a proud member of Nonprofit Westchester and the Westchester Women's Agenda.

CRC's Building Our Future Program is our comprehensive workforce development initiative in which we aim to reduce barriers to initial and/or continuous employment and to help obtain work. We equip low-wage immigrant families with better work opportunities, upward mobility, and the ability to continue to make significant contributions to the local economy. Funding of \$60,000 from the county for this program allows us to serve over 1,200 Westchester County residents with educational programs, job training, and worker's advocacy and empowerment.

Our county has continued to see an increase in migrants and with inflation still high, our economy will continue to need the boost that immigrants bring to it through their participation in the workforce. BOF gives individuals an opportunity to learn English; get their GED; study to become U.S. citizens; provide the labor that has sustained Westchester's economic wealth even through the COVID pandemic; and contribute to their community as volunteers, advocates, and good neighbors, adding significantly to Westchester's overall social and economic health.

*Let me share our client's story:*

Brayan, originally from Guatemala, came to the United States in 2019 and began working as a day laborer taking on challenging jobs. Despite the demanding work, Brayan was determined to improve himself. A friend of his referred him to the CRC where Brayan immersed himself in construction, blueprint reading courses, and OSHA training. Brayan quickly advanced to a supervisor position, but his journey didn't stop there; he then took GED classes, paving the way for college.

Brayan dreams of a career in construction management. As a devoted father, he is committed to providing a better life for his family. He is thankful to those program funders that empower individuals like him to achieve his dreams.



Good afternoon everyone, my name is Alex Martinez and I am a Digital Navigator for The STEM Alliance and I am here to request inclusion of Connect Westchester in the 2025 County Budget. As one of the people in the field I want to tell you exactly the work that your dollars are funding. My job is to make sure that every client, and *cohort* participant, with needs has equal access to computer ownership, free/low cost internet and the basic skills to use those tools. Let me give you a sense of some of the things I do:

- Every week I teach approximately 20 or more hours of *cohorts* to a variety of people with different skill levels.
- I deliver devices and hotspots to those who do not have any computer or internet access.
- I take troubleshooting calls to help past participants and clients
- I follow up with them three to six months later to see how our assistance is helping them in their everyday lives.

You heard me use the word cohort a couple of times now, so I would like to give you the reason why we use this specific word as one of its meanings speaks true to us.

Cohort: "a group of people who share a characteristic."

From my very first time assisting in a cohort, to conducting my first one up to the present time, there is a shared characteristic that has stayed consistent.....

When I first meet a group of clients, there is an overwhelming sense of anxiety which often comes from a very "simple" place; I've had many participants who would not even click on something unless I confirmed it 2 or 3 times that it is okay to do so....

This "simple" place is the fear of "doing something wrong" because they don't want to "break the computer". They aren't just scared of the device itself, they are scared of the unknown, because when you don't know something, you are more likely to make a mistake, and mistakes are supposed to be "bad"; mistakes are supposed to be "avoided", right?.....

As a Digital Navigator, I have to understand that I am not just teaching them skills, I am taking them on a journey to join the digital world, a world that for many of our participants lies in this unknown territory; a territory that should be avoided because they do not want to make a mistake.





My personal job is to provide them with the space where they feel comfortable enough to allow me to get to know them in order to show how these technological skills can be relevant in their lives and how mistakes aren't these abnormalities to avoid, but rather a natural occurrence in the learning process.

Over the past year and half, I've seen firsthand how essential this work is and I would like to emphasize the impact this program can have and has had for our participants:

To assist and stay in touch with loved ones:

"[It is] Very comfortable to use for my son's therapy over zoom, to make doctor's appointments and to see my mother through video conference as we haven't been together for 25 years"

- Participant at Catholic Charities, Yonkers back in March 2024

The quote that encapsulates all the meaningful work that has been done so far would be the following:

"The training provided by the program has been immensely beneficial. [...] Currently, I am pursuing an online cybersecurity course [...], which will result in a professional certification. This course has been a pivotal factor in my decision to engage in online learning. The use of my laptop has become an integral part of my daily life, aiding not just myself but also my friends and family. I attribute a significant part of this positive change to the program's staff, whose support was instrumental in equipping me with the necessary confidence and tools to embrace new opportunities and strive for an improved quality of life."

- Participant at YWCA in White Plains back in January 2024

Going back to what I mentioned before, about the word cohort: "a group of people who share a characteristic". You might have thought that that characteristic was anxiety or fear. But that would be incorrect, or rather not the answer that provides the full picture.

The shared characteristic that has always stayed consistent is that, despite the fear and anxiety, every single one of the people that we have helped had the courage to take that *first step* to take a course or ask for assistance from an organization called The STEM Alliance.

Once again I ask you to please make Connect Westchester a priority in the 2025 county budget. Thank you for your time.

Alex Martinez

The **STEM** Alliance

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## 11/14/2024 Budget Hearing

**Good Evening. I'm Howard Milbert and I am the Executive Director of the Ossining Children's Center and the Co-President of the Westchester Early Childhood Director's Association. I am here today with parents, children and staff from day care centers throughout Northern Westchester.**

**First, I would like to thank you for making childcare affordable for hundreds of Westchester's young families. By raising the Westchester Works Childcare Scholarship Program's eligibility cutoff, you have enabled hundreds of middle-income parents to work and thrive in our County .**

**Child care is expensive. It is not unusual for infant care to cost over \$24,000 annually, an amount many new families can't afford. Your increase enabled families to set down roots and allowed businesses to hire new employees. In fact, these families are now depending on the County's continued aid to stay afloat. Businesses are also counting on your child care support to keep these employees at their jobs.**

**With all your invaluable support to Westchester's economy, we ask that you reject the newly proposed 1.65 million dollar funding cut to the Westchester Works Scholarship. We would even ask that you consider adding another \$250,000 to the scholarship to help more families.**



**Second, as expensive as child care is, it does not pay well, > even with most of a center's income going to staff salaries. As a result, staff are leaving the field at a rate that is precipitating a child care crisis. This year, the state provided bonuses directly to child care staff to help stabilize this work force. I am therefore asking that you petition the Governnor to repeat these NYS bonuses, and that you rouse our state delegation to likewise fight for another round of this all-important funding. Thank you for your attention.**

