



Westchester County Legislator
SHANAE WILLIAMS
Proudly Serving the 16th District



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GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

I was proud to support the work of the Westchester County Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, a diverse group of leaders and experts committed to reducing gun violence through data-driven, community-informed solutions. Over the past year, five subcommittees collaborated to analyze five years of county data, engage stakeholders, and develop strategies focused on prevention, education, policy, youth engagement, and community coordination.

This work revealed that more than half of gun-related deaths in Westchester are the result of suicide—consistent with state and national trends—highlighting the importance of education, safe storage, and partnerships with suicide prevention organizations. The task force has also engaged gun shop owners to strengthen collaboration and promote safe storage as a key strategy to reduce impulsive violence. Ongoing efforts include public awareness campaigns, youth initiatives such as the Beyond the Bullet conference, and policy advocacy to support evidence-based violence prevention at the local and state levels. ■



Serving on the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force

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Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

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2025 Year in Review



Shanae Williams

Majority Whip, 16th District Legislator ~ Yonkers
 Chair, Committee on Infrastructure & Housing



Dear District 16 and Friends,

At the end of the year, I concluded my first term serving as your County Legislator, and I want to sincerely thank you for the opportunity to serve. I am deeply grateful and proud of what we were able to accomplish at the Westchester County Board of Legislators, particularly during a time of significant challenges facing both our community and our nation.

When I first ran for County Legislator in 2023, my top priority was addressing affordable housing countywide. It was an honor to serve as chair of the Housing & Planning Committee, where we took meaningful steps to confront the housing crisis. (See the Housing section inside for details.)

Maternal health equity has also been a critical focus of my work. Black women continue to face disproportionately high maternal mortality rates, an issue that is deeply personal to me, having nearly lost my sister during childbirth. I was proud to support Birth from the Earth with a \$20,000 award, enabling them to expand access to home births supported by midwives and doulas. Providing women with safe, supportive, and informed choices during pregnancy is essential to improving outcomes and saving lives.

As homelessness continues to rise—particularly among individuals experiencing substance use disorder and mental health challenges—I have remained committed to advocating for those who are often unable to advocate for themselves. I have worked closely with county partners, including Search for Change and the Safe Options Support (SOS) Team, to connect individuals living on the streets in downtown Yonkers with shelter, services, and pathways toward permanent housing. For information on SOS Team services in Westchester, contact Search for Change at this web address: searchforchange.org/community-support/safe-options-support or call 914-428-5600 x9270.

Our annual Domestic Violence Awareness Campaign was once again a success. I am deeply thankful to everyone who participated in and supported the 5K Run/Walk, which raised \$3,000 for Hope's Door—an organization that provides critical services and support to survivors of domestic violence.

Sincerely,

Shanae Williams

PICTURED TOP TO BOTTOM: 1. Delivering funding to Birth from the Earth 2. In the community with Search for Change 3. Hope's Door donation event 4. Kickoff for Break the Silence 5K 5. Break the Silence on Domestic Violence 5K



HOUSING



Speaking at the Affordable Housing Legislation Signing

A major milestone in advancing housing stability was achieved with the launch of the Westchester County Office of Housing Counsel (OHC). This first-of-its-kind, county-level program provides financially eligible tenants with free legal representation and support in eviction and related housing proceedings. In addition to legal services, OHC coordinates pre-eviction assistance and counseling through a centralized system. Two hundred fifteen Yonkers residents have contacted the OHC, resulting in \$216,284 in rental arrears assistance, and helping to preserve stable housing for some of our community's most vulnerable residents. To apply for housing-related support, call 211 or go to **housingcounsel.westchestergov.com**. Submissions are reviewed by OHC staff who connect residents to appropriate services.

DELIVERING AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR WORKING FAMILIES

More affordable homes are on the way for Westchester's working families. Legislation passed by the Board and signed by County Executive Ken Jenkins in October will help launch a new 16-story development on South Broadway

in Yonkers featuring 160 affordable rental apartments. The County will contribute nearly \$10 million in funding for land purchase and infrastructure construction. The new homes will be within reach for households earning between 50% and 80% of the area median income—opening doors for families that have struggled to find affordable housing.



Announcing Yonkers Affordable Housing Development

INVESTING IN SAFE, HEALTHY CONDITIONS AT COUNTY'S LARGEST FAMILY SHELTER

To improve air quality and building reliability at the County's largest family shelter, the Board approved \$855,000 for critical renovations to the Coachman Family Center in White Plains. Projects include replacing deteriorating water lines, upgrading fire suppression, and improving

identify victims in extreme danger and coordinate emergency services to protect them and their families before tragedy strikes.

LAUNCHING BLUE ENVELOPE PROGRAM ACROSS THE COUNTY

To promote safer interactions between law enforcement and drivers with autism and other disabilities during traffic stops, the Board launched the Blue

ventilation systems. The shelter houses up to 100 families with 189 children, providing housing-focused case management, skill-building support, childcare, and youth programs. This investment demonstrates the county's commitment to supporting families working toward permanent housing and independence.

CREATING AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR YOUNG ADULTS AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE AND WORKING FAMILIES

In July, the Board approved the purchase of property in Peekskill to create 22 affordable housing units, 10 of which are designated as supportive housing for young adults 18–25 who have aged out of foster care. A \$3.4 million investment will support the project's development by The Children's Village nonprofit organization. The remaining 12 units will be made available for rent by working families struggling with housing costs. Once complete, the property will provide critical housing stability for the next 50 years to youth transitioning to independence and financially eligible families.

PAVING THE WAY TO FIRST-TIME HOMEOWNERSHIP

The Board passed the Land Acquisition Act in January, investing \$10 million to transform unoccupied buildings in downtown White Plains into affordable condominiums for first-time homebuyers. This creative collaboration with the County Executive will convert a dormitory and office building into 108 affordable housing units with 89 parking spaces—creating homeownership opportunities where our community needs them most. ■

Envelope Program with County Executive Ken Jenkins in April. Participants are given a distinctive blue envelope to store their driver's license, registration, and insurance information. The envelope signals to officers that the driver may require communication help, and includes tips for both drivers and officers to encourage clear, respectful, and calm interactions.

COMBATING AI-GENERATED DEEPFAKES

Imagine an elderly neighbor answers a frantic call from their "grandchild" begging for emergency money. The neighbor sends funds immediately, only to discover later that they've been targeted by scammers using AI to mimic their grandchild's voice.

To better protect residents against this and other types of fraud, the Board passed an innovative local law in February prohibiting the distribution of digitally deceptive material with the intent to harm. The measure strengthens the County's ability to keep residents free from harassment, extortion, identity theft, and sexual exploitation using content created with AI.



Speaking Out at Con Ed Public Input Session

TAKING A STAND AGAINST CON EDISON RATE HIKES

In March, the Westchester County Board of Legislators mobilized to oppose Con Edison's proposed double-digit rate hikes, partnering with County Executive Ken Jenkins to become a party in the rate case before the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC). The alarming proposed increases—11.4% for electricity and 13.3% for gas by 2026—would place a heavy burden on working families, seniors, and small businesses already struggling with exorbitant utility bills. At six Public Input Sessions hosted by the Board across the County, residents were given an opportunity to voice their concerns. Comments generated by the Board's Public Input Sessions were submitted to the PSC and became part of the public record. Legislators vowed they will not allow Con Ed to pass excessive costs onto residents without a fight.

UPGRADING SECURITY SYSTEMS TO PROTECT CORRECTIONS OFFICERS AND DETAINEES

In August, legislators approved a \$6.6 million investment to replace outdated

security systems at the Westchester County Department of Correction in Valhalla, significantly improving safety for correctional staff and detainees. The state-of-the-art emergency alert systems will provide real-time monitoring capabilities, faster emergency response times, more reliable communication, and immediate alerting to the control center. The upgrades will replace 25-year-old systems that have become difficult to maintain. Full implementation is expected by the end of 2027.

HONORING VETERANS WITH FREE COUNTY PARK PASSES

To honor the service and sacrifice of our U.S. military, the Board of Legislators approved in January an Act providing free County park passes to all veterans living in Westchester. This Board-led initiative extends an existing benefit that covered only active duty military and disabled veterans. Now, more than 100,000 local veterans can enjoy the beauty of Westchester County Parks free of charge. The Act aims to promote health and wellness so that older veterans especially can enjoy natural spaces without financial barriers.

PRESERVING NEW YORK'S HISTORIC ROLE IN THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

In July, the Board passed a bipartisan resolution supporting the designation of the *Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad New York Scenic Byway*, a proposed 544-mile route across 22 counties, which formally recognizes sites tied to Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad. If adopted by the state, Westchester will partner with neighboring counties to promote heritage programming, encourage tourism, and protect the historic corridor from off-premise advertisements.



At the DIAPRS Legislation Signing

ENSURING EQUAL CHANGING ACCESS FOR ALL FAMILIES

To ensure all parents and caregivers have equal access to diaper changing

stations, the Board passed the "DIAPRS Act" for County parks and publicly accessible County-owned buildings. This legislation, signed into law in October, addresses the disparity where changing stations are commonly found in women's restrooms but often missing from men's restrooms. The Department of Public Works and Transportation will develop a plan to identify locations, assess costs, and set installation timelines for new changing stations. The plan will ensure that at least one station is accessible to all on every floor of County buildings and in all County park bathrooms. ■

TRAINING AND EDUCATING OUR WORKFORCE

ENHANCING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND STUDENT SERVICES AT WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Board greenlit the Westchester Community College Educational Opportunity Center's move to a bigger, better home in Yonkers to help train more local residents for good-paying jobs. Legislators approved an 11-year lease for a modern 44,000-square-foot facility at 28 Wells Avenue that will significantly expand the center's ability to provide tuition-free vocational training and workforce development programs. The improved facilities, parking, and security at the new facility means more Westchester adults can gain the skills and credentials local employers need. The expanded center is set to open in July 2026.

In August, the Board supported educational opportunities for 13,000 students by approving a substantial \$158.8 million budget for SUNY Westchester Community College (WCC) in 2025–26—an increase of 10% year on year. This investment included \$127.5 million for operations and \$31.3 million for facility improvements and technology upgrades. This funding reinforces WCC as an accessible pathway to higher education and workforce development, serving residents who plan to transfer to four-year universities or enter careers directly after graduation. ■