

Westchester County Legislator

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SUPPORTING DISTRICT NON-PROFITS

Our local non-profits are a huge part of what makes our District a wonderful place to live. In 2024, I secured over \$300K in funding, allowing Westchester County to partner with our district non-profits and deliver more services in our area.

Programs identified for 2025 support include those providing: mental health care for female Veterans with PTSD, support for families who are caring for a child that has a life-threatening illness and for families with children with special needs aging out of the school system, mental health for area youth, supports for those facing food insecurity or domestic violence, and assistance to the unhoused in our community. Funding is also going to support local National Night Out programs, and Mt Kisco's upcoming sesquicentennial.

2025 Funding Recipients include:

- The Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester
- New Dawn Family Resource Center
- Community Based Services
- Friends of Karen
- Endeavor Therapeutic Horsemanship
- The Emergency Shelter Partnership
- The Interfaith Food Pantry
- The Community Center of Northern Westchester
- Mt Kisco Historical Society

Pictured, top to bottom: Announcing 2024 funding with Endeavor Therapeutic Horsemanship; Celebrating funding with the Boys and Girls Club of Northern Westchester



Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

2024 Year in Review



Legislator Erika Pierce

District 2 ~ Bedford, Lewisboro, Mount Kisco, North Salem, Pound Ridge, Somers
Chair, Public Works & Transportation



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

District Two includes six towns with diverse communities, each with its unique needs. As the legislator representing the district, I have worked cooperatively with our local governments and nonprofits, and assisted hundreds of constituents on a wide range of issues. (If you do not already receive my weekly e-blast, please use the QR code below to sign up.)

As I review the year, certain moments stand out:

The Board of Legislators passed new legislation making it easier for domestic violence survivors to access security cameras and door locks, advanced programs for flooding mitigation and created more affordable housing units. We saw the roll out of school bus stop-arm cameras, an important tool for keeping our school kids safe. We worked with the NYS Comptroller to host unclaimed funds events that returned millions of dollars to our residents. We also saw the repaving of Route 35 and, after years of collective effort on all levels, a drop in opioid deaths.

I worked concertedly with our schools to advocate for restoring NYS Foundation Aid funding, organizing a large press conference and testifying in NYC on behalf of our funding needs. This led to an invitation to meet with the Rockefeller Institute, the organization tasked with recommending structural changes to the Foundation Aid formula, to tell our communities' story and advocate for our needs.

Residents visited our County Parks in droves. Muscot Farm won the championship title in our Parks Department's inaugural Parks March Madness tournament. And after many years in court, we resolved issues with the deed at Merestead Park and we celebrated with members of the family who gifted the property to the County. More updates for our Parks can be found inside.

I am happy to share that I was awarded the New York State Public Health Association's 2024 Legislator of the Year Award, which recognizes a single legislator in NYS who has been a public health champion. In addition, I was appointed Vice Chair to the National Association of County's Environment, Energy and Land Use Steering Committee. In both cases, my work on waste reduction and efforts on behalf of water quality, including the impacts of septic systems and PFAS, were key and I look forward to continuing that work.

As we prepare to enter 2025 with an operating budget that maintains the same property tax levy it has for the last six years, I am proud of the work we have done. I am also incredibly grateful for the opportunity to represent this district and eager to continue the work ahead.

Very Truly Yours,

SUBSCRIBE TO MY MAILING LIST!

For public health alerts, information about upcoming events in our community and breaking news on legislation that affects you — **SIGN UP NOW!**

Scan QR code or visit: bit.ly/district-2-enews

We are scheduling forums and other events. Make certain to sign up for eblasts to get details when they become available.



With Bedford PO Carelli at the Katonah Library celebrating families during Pride



With Deputy County Executive Jenkins and State Senator Harkham at the Mount Kisco Fire Department Parade



Honoring those lost on September 11th in Pound Ridge



World Circus Day and the unveiling of Old Bet with Somers Historical Society President Jonathon Benjamin and storyteller Jonathon Kruk



With Plant People at North Salem's Hammond Museum

PUBLIC SAFETY

Crime rates in Westchester County have once again declined, according to the latest data from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. That is due, in good part, to the continued hard work done to maintain everyone's safety, in ways both seen and unseen. Ongoing County programs include a multi-agency high-risk task force for domestic violence, a real-time crime center that supports local departments and school districts, and supports, including training, for local volunteer agencies. Westchester also invests in the shared equipment needed to resolve local emergencies, ranging from helicopters to find lost hikers to additional ambulances and mobile command centers. Plus, I continue to provide NARCAN trainings in the community, and continue to work with Project Alliance, our mental health diversion team, to best support residents and first responders. **This year's highlights include:**



Announcing the passage of legislation protecting domestic and gender-violence survivors

SAFETY MEASURES FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT: The Board passed legislation to provide no-cost home lock changes and security cameras for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence, helping to protect survivors.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION TASK FORCE: A recent CDC report shows U.S. gun deaths at a 30-year high, with firearm injury the leading cause of death among children and teens. The Board and County Executive have launched a Countywide Gun Violence Prevention Task Force to address this issue at the local level.

ANTI-TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE PROGRAM ACT: Funded by a Federal Department of Justice grant, this Task Force will improve victim identification, investigative methods, and prosecution strategies, partnering with police to target trafficking hotspots.

SCHOOL BUS STOP-ARM PROGRAM: This traffic enforcement program, rolled out this fall, will strengthen protections for children at school bus stops and better ensure their safe travel to and from school.



Announcing the roll out of the first school bus stop-arm cameras



NARCAN training with LVAC at the Lewisboro Library

UNIFIED SUICIDE PREVENTION NUMBER – 988: By establishing a new local Suicide Prevention number, 988, Westchester County is guaranteeing that every at-risk resident who calls the Suicide Line is connected with local resources.

HERRO SCHOLARSHIPS: Westchester's Volunteer Higher Education Recruitment and Retention Opportunities (HERRO) scholarships continue to provide tuition or student loan reimbursement to fire and ambulance volunteers. Over 400 volunteers, including 79 in District 2, have received scholarships. ■

COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECH UPGRADE

Investments in infrastructure and technology, from pump stations to water treatment plants and sewers, airports, roads, bridges and parks, are crucial for our residents' quality of life. As Chair of Public Works and Transportation, this is the work my committee oversees. **With over 90 Bond Acts passed this year, some highlights include:**

PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINTS SYSTEM (PSAP) BOND ACT: A \$1.3 million investment to modernize 911 Call Centers that handle emergency calls and coordinate responses.

SEWER IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS: Enhancing infrastructure and improving energy efficiency, these projects include improvements to Force Mains in Peekskill, Port Chester and Tarrytown, restoration to County-owned sewer lines in multiple districts, a new relief sewer in Peekskill, and plant-wide upgrades in Ossining, among other wastewater projects.

NEW LABS & RESEARCH FACILITY: \$4.2M to design a much-needed new Department of Laboratories and Research facility in Valhalla, which is responsible for scientific tests in matters ranging from public health to criminal evidence.

UNIFIED DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND NEW COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER: The County is bringing all Department of Health services under one roof for improved efficiency.



Additionally, our new community-run mental health clinic in White Plains moves closer to opening its doors.

AQUEDUCT REPAIR PROJECT: As part of NYS's work to repair leaks in the aqueduct system, the County is investing \$8.75M to design and install an alternative water connection, as well as to provide repairs to existing water infrastructure.

NEW PARATRANSIT VEHICLES: \$1.75M has been approved to purchase new vehicles, which will provide more reliable Paratransit services to area residents.

HOUSING: Westchester continues to be a partner in the creation of new

and affordable housing, supporting nine new projects around the County with \$35.675M in New Homes Land Acquisition funding and \$8.134M from the Housing Implementation Fund.

REPLACEMENT OF FIRE TRAINING FACILITIES, AND IMPROVEMENTS TO BLUE MOUNTAIN: Multiple programs to support the training of our first responders including: \$2M to design a new Fire Training Tower, \$2M to purchase a new Smoke House, and \$1.1M to design improvements to a facility used by County and local first responders for target practice and training. ■

DISTRICT TWO PARK PROJECTS

- **Muscot Farm** – Long-awaited work, including new bathrooms and parking lot, nears completion.
- **Lasdon Park & Arboretum** - Work underway: septic systems, pathways, and landscaping.
- **Merestead Park** – \$1.5M for restoration of the historic farmhouse. A study of the historic barn was added to the capital plan and after many years in court, issues with the deed at Merestead were resolved, lifting many of the restrictions that had made it hard for us to build a future for this local gem.
- **Ward Pound Ridge Reservation** – 99% of the structural steel for the rebuilding of the firetower is on site.
- **Mountain Lakes Park** – \$1.9M to design a new drinking water system for the park and install new yurts.
- **2025 Work Plan** – Restoration of the Merestead Farmhouse, Rebuilding the Fire Tower and Reroofing Mountain Lakes' Camp Hemlock and Camp Morty.

JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE MAJOR ANNIVERSARIES WITH BOTH MUSCOOT (50 YEARS) AND WARD POUND RIDGE (100 YEARS) IN 2025!

Pictured, top to bottom: Signing legislation ending litigation over the Merestead deed; New bathrooms at Muscot Farm



GREEN ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INITIATIVES

These measures combat climate change, invest in our green infrastructure, and boost composting and recycling. **Highlights include:**

FLOOD MITIGATION: Westchester introduced a new Director of Flood Mitigation this year, and passed \$2M to develop projects designed to reduce flooding and prepare technical materials needed for related grant applications.



Touring areas with a history of flooding

ROADWAY CULVERT RESTORATION: A program to inspect and evaluate culverts and structures along County roads, identifying and prioritizing areas where work would reduce flooding.

COMPOST FACILITY & WASTE REDUCTION STUDIES: Two important studies have been initiated: one to design and develop a large-scale composting facility, which will keep organic matter out of our waste stream, and another to reduce waste overall.

SOURCE SEPARATION AMENDMENT: This amendment updates the law to require separate waste and recycling bins in public areas and clarifies food composting and reporting rules.



Native Plants grown from seed at Hilltop Hanover Farm

INVESTMENT IN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE: Westchester welcomed our new County Forester this year, and continues to grow native plants and trees. A Tree Canopy Study, a critical tool for planning projects, will be initiated in 2025. ■