

WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM, INC. / VICTIMS ASSISTANCE SERVICES
WESTCHESTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH
WESTCHESTER COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE DISABLED
WESTCHESTER INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER
WESTCHESTER COUNTY OFFICE FOR WOMEN

WESTCHESTER SAFE

access

Empowerment through accessibility.

THE WESTCHESTER SAFE ACCESS COLLABORATION IS SUPPORTED BY GRANT NO. 2012-FW-AX-K001 "EDUCATION, TRAINING AND ENHANCED SERVICES TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST AND ABUSE OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES GRANT PROGRAM" AWARDED BY THE OFFICE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

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Alone we can
do so little;
together we can
do so much.

~ HELEN KELLER

INTRODUCTION

The Westchester Safe Access Collaboration consists of the Victims Assistance Services (VAS) component of Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc. (WestCOP), the Westchester Independent Living Center (WILC), and three Westchester County entities: the Office For Women (OFW), the Office For the Disabled (OFD), and the Department of Community Mental Health (DCMH). While collaboration members have worked together in the past in varying constellations, they came together in the Spring of 2012 with the express purpose of addressing the identified problem of sexual and intimate partner violence as it affects persons with disabilities. The collaboration was awarded a grant from the Office of Violence Against Women in September 2012, enabling the Partners to bring together the strengths and resources of all the Partners, with the eventual goal being the design and implementation of fully-accessible services and advocacy for individuals with disabilities and D/deaf persons who experience (or are at risk of) sexual and domestic violence.

The Project will result in significant changes to the organizational cultures of the Partner agencies that can then be transferred to related agencies involved in similar services. The expectation is that the changes will be embedded in systemic structures, policies and procedures and will continue to guide relationships among disabilities advocacy providers, victim advocacy agencies and persons with disabilities and D/deaf communities.

VISION STATEMENT

“We envision a Westchester County where community members with disabilities are free from all violence; until that happens, we seek to create a safe, accessible, culturally competent and compassionate response to sexual and/or domestic violence.”

MISSION STATEMENT

To make the systemic changes necessary so that persons with disabilities who survive sexual and/or domestic violence have access to the services they need. We will accomplish that system change through:

- Building an effective collaboration
- Engaging in cross trainings, so that partnering agencies fully share their knowledge and experiences.
- Increasing staff and volunteer skills, confidence and comfort engaging persons at the intersection of sexual and/or domestic violence and disability.
- Identifying barriers, needs, strengths and resources in the community
- Changing our agencies’ internal policies & procedures in response to the needs assessment.
- Creating environments where the right to self determination is honored.

VALUES

The Collaboration’s values are the foundation of the Westchester Safe Access Project. Our values will direct us in our development of systemic change within our organizations and in our work moving forward. These values will not only guide our work internally, they will also guide our work with survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence with disabilities and D/deaf persons. The Westchester Safe Access values were developed specifically for our collaboration and each partner agrees that our actions will be guided by them.

The overall goal of the Collaboration is to transform our organizations to be safe, welcoming and fully accessible for persons with disabilities and D/deaf persons who are survivors of sexual and domestic violence.

The Collaboration has identified the following core values:

The Collaboration agrees that survivors’ disclosures of abuse will be believed without judgment.

The Collaboration agrees that all people have the right to live their lives free from abuse and fear.

The Collaboration believes that all survivors have the right to services that are fully accessible.

Accessibility It is the Collaboration’s belief that survivors with disabilities and D/deaf persons have a right to fully accessible services. Full accessibility includes both: 1) accessible accommodations: buildings and facilities

that meet American Disability Act (ADA) standards; and 2) accessible services, which require that providers possess sensitivity and self-awareness:

- Awareness of one's own views, attitudes, biases and privileges.
- Awareness of the ways in which those attitudes affect service delivery.
- Knowledge of disability services and world views.
- Skills and knowledge across disabilities.

Cultural and Disability Competency The Collaboration believes that in order to be fully accessible, service providers must be fluent in their understanding of the unique strengths, needs, resources, challenges and cultural values that survivors possess, across cultures and across disability status.

Confidentiality The Collaboration is committed to the ethical principle that Westchester Safe Access will hold all client information not intended to be disclosed to third parties in confidence, unless the individual gives consent permitting disclosure or unless the disclosure is required by the law.

Empowerment The Collaboration is committed to promote the self-actualization of another human being. An Empowerment Model *encourages* people to gain the skills and knowledge that will allow them to overcome obstacles in life or work environment and ultimately, help them develop within themselves or in the society.

Inclusion The Collaboration believes that all persons have the right to participate fully in society.

Integrity The Collaboration agrees that both the process and the products of Project Gateway, including the development of policies and procedures, will be aligned with our mission and values.

Person-Centered The Collaboration recognizes that the people we serve are at the center of our work, and that all project activities, services, and supports will be informed by survivors' preferences, choices, needs and strengths.

Safety The Collaboration believes that survivors, when informed, are the best judge of what is safe for them, and we agree to support survivors by providing a safe environment for service delivery, and by engaging in best practices as established by the domestic violence and sexual assault movements.

Self Determination The Collaboration believes that survivors have the right and the capacity to make informed decisions.

People/Person First The Collaboration acknowledges the importance of defining survivors first as people, rather than defining them by the disability they may have. People-First language refers to persons with disabilities rather than disabled people.

ASSUMPTIONS

- Women and girls are significantly more likely to be victimized by sexual and intimate partner violence, although boys and men are also victimized.
- Across gender, persons with disabilities and D/deaf persons are significantly more likely to be victimized by sexual and intimate partner violence than are members of the larger community.
- Persons with disabilities and D/deaf persons who are survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence often experience additional challenges in escaping an abusive situation.
- Providers of services to survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence may need training so that they develop the skills and knowledge necessary to be fully accessible to persons with disabilities and D/deaf persons.
- Our goal of safe, accessible, culturally competent and compassionate services for persons with disabilities and D/deaf persons is both important and possible.
- Survivors with disabilities and D/deaf survivors who are also members of other oppressed communities may encounter additional challenges to accessing appropriate services.

MEMBER AGENCIES

The Westchester Safe Access Collaboration includes five Partners (appendix I):



Victims Assistance Services (VAS), a component of Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc. (WestCOP) is a not-for-profit comprehensive crime victim's services program, with extensive experience in serving and advocating for victim-survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence. VAS has more than 30 years experience in providing a full range of free, compassionate and confidential services, including advocacy and accompaniment through the forensic and criminal justice system processes, crisis intervention, counseling, trauma therapies provided by credentialed therapists, safety planning, facilitated referrals to shelter, assistance with New York State Office of Victim Services compensation applications, emergency financial assistance including emergency awards for HIV prophylaxis medications and a host of other services. All VAS staff is certified for New York State's Rape Crisis Confidentiality privilege and in addition, WESTCOP/VAS recruits, trains and closely supervises a cadre of certified volunteer rape crisis counselor-advocates who are available to clients during non-business hours. WESTCOP/VAS provides community outreach and education about sexual assault and other related topics to schools, community groups, law enforcement and professional organizations. WESTCOP/VAS also provides a full-range of non-residential services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. WESTCOP-VAS services are victim-centered and trauma-informed, and observe established best practices, including the use of enhanced confidentiality protections, to ensure client safety. For the 2011 calendar year, WESTCOP/VAS served 3,071 clients, including 1,413 victims of domestic violence, 350 adult victims of sexual assault and 256 child victims of sexual abuse. WestCOP/VAS is Lead Partner and Fiscal conduit for the Westchester Safe Access Project, and serves as expert on issues involving rape and other forms of sexual violence.

Board of Directors

WESTCOP, INC Interim Chief Executive Officer: John S. Savage

VAS Director: May Krukiel, MA, MEd

***Project Manager:** Rebecka Palmer, BSW



The Westchester Independent Living Center, Inc. (“WILC”): WILC was established in 1981 and is a well-respected not-for-profit, community-based, consumer-directed advocacy and resource center agency that services people of all ages with all types of disabilities and advocates for the rights of individuals with disabilities. Founded in 1981, WILC is a community-based, grass-roots, consumer-directed advocacy and resource center. WILC’s mission and philosophy is to assist individuals with disabilities to become as independent as they can be and to work with our local and state-wide community to provide education, disability awareness, and advocacy for the removal of barriers. WILC has a 31 year history of providing information, services, advocacy, technical assistance, and training in Westchester County and the Lower Hudson Valley Region. WILC serves people of all ages with all physical and mental disabilities, including parents, spouses, siblings and significant others of persons with disabilities. WILC also serves school personnel, hospitals, health care organizations and/or underserved populations. The medical community, human services organizations, civic organizations, business and industry, and local governments. WILC is a strong proponent of personal empowerment and self-advocacy.

Board of Directors

Executive Director: Joe Bravo, MBA

Coordinator of Minority Services: Tamaris Princi, LMSW



The Westchester County Office For Women (“OFW”) is dedicated to promoting the physical, emotional and financial well-being of all women. The OFW provides direct non-residential services to victims/survivors of domestic violence and oversees and administers county funding of other domestic violence and sexual assault victims service providers. The director of the OFW chairs and convenes the Domestic Violence Council, which oversees Westchester’s “coordinated community response to domestic violence”, and brings together service providers, law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, specialized civil legal services, survivors, and other stakeholders to address intimate partner violence. The OFW also was instrumental in initiating the county’s Family Justice Center. Programs and services include Hotline, short-term counseling, crisis intervention, safety planning, referral to shelter, bilingual translation of forms and documents, and information and referrals through the Family Helpline. The OFW also offers Operation Talent Bank, workshops in self-sufficiency and career enhancement, and training to professionals and community groups. The OFW will provide the Project with expertise in intimate partner violence and the systems available for safety and support in Westchester County.

Westchester County Executive

Director: Robi Schlaff, Esq

Senior Manager: Diane Balistreri, BA

Program Administrator Domestic Violence Systems: Thea DuBow, MS



Westchester County Office For the Disabled (“OFD”). The mission of the Office for the Disabled is to act as a clearinghouse of information for persons with disabilities in Westchester County, their families and advocates, and to advise County departments on compliance with State and Federal laws which prohibit discrimination based on disability in activities of local government. OFD is the County’s American Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator, and works to enhance community awareness of and response to the Americans with Disabilities Act and to ensure the availability of transportation services for the disabled in compliance with the ADA. The OFD also supports the County’s commitment to provide ASL interpreters to all individuals who need them, and compiles a Disabilities Resource Guide listing services available to persons with disabilities and to members of D/deaf communities. In addition, the office manages curb-to-curb Para Transit services for elderly and disabled persons within Westchester County. The Office for the Disabled also provides public education and outreach programs and special events through our Handicapped Parking Education Program, and Disability Awareness presentations to students of all ages. OFD works to raise community awareness of the needs of the disabled and expand opportunities for them in education, recreation, employment and transportation. Along with DCMH, OFD provides comprehensive coordination and support to the County’s many providers of services to disabled individuals and the D/deaf community.

Westchester County Executive

Director: Evan Latainer, MA

Mobility Specialist/ Disability Awareness Ed Coord/Community Work Assist: Anna Masopust



Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health (“DCMH”) is responsible for the oversight, management and coordination of comprehensive services to individuals with mental illness, chemical dependencies and developmental disabilities. DCMH provides access to a wide array of person-centered, recovery-oriented services. Some services are provided directly by the Department while the majority is made available through contracts with community agencies. The Department directly provides care coordination, police and mental health crisis intervention team, transitional case management, mental health alternatives to incarceration, and Homeless Outreach services. In addition, DCMH processes referrals for case management and housing services to providers in the community. The Department also trains law enforcement personnel in ways to de-escalate individuals in crisis in the community without injury. In its work with persons with developmental disabilities, DCMH provides services to individuals in need of residential placement, and the staff of the county’s Medicaid_Service Coordination program (MSC) provides case management services. The Department operates Treatment Alternatives to Safer Communities (TASC)—a jail diversion program for individuals with chemical dependencies.

Westchester County Executive

Acting Commissioner: Melissa Staats, MA, MSW

Program Director, Community Support Services: Annette Peters-Ruvolo, LCSW

Program Administrator (MH Courts): Michelle Hart, MA

CONTRIBUTIONS AND COMMITMENTS

Westchester Safe Access Partners have come together to form an intensive multi-agency collaboration to create sustainable change within Westchester County, NY.

The Collaboration recognizes that the private, not-for-profit Partners (WILC and WestCOP/VAS) can more directly impact and change their internal structures and policies than can those Partners who are part of county government.

The Collaboration also recognizes that any structural and/or policy changes achieved by the county government Partners will have a significant positive ripple effect throughout county systems.

In order for us to optimize our joint efforts, this Partnership has developed and committed to the following set of expectations and guidelines.

PROJECT MANAGER commits and contributes to:

- Coordinating and facilitating individual and collaboration meetings.
- Documenting and sending collaboration meeting minutes to Work Group Members.
- Serving as the primary contact for Vera and the OVW.
- Documenting progress of the collaboration, as necessary.
- Maintaining continued movement toward completion of collaboration deliverables.
- Preparing and finalizing products for submission to OVW and Vera, based on collaboration concept and product development, and incorporating Work Group Member input and feedback.
- Completing semi-annual reports and submitting them on Grant Management System (GMS).
- Working with Fiscal Agent on fiscal reports and budget modification submission on GMS, as needed.
- Guiding the Project to meet goals and objectives.

WESTCOP/VAS, WILC, OFW, OFD and **DCMH** all agree that senior level staff at each partner agency will fully participate in an active and meaningful manner in the following activities:

- All meetings and activities of the Planning and Development Team.
- Meet in-person a minimum of eight (8) hours a month.
- All OVW Technical Assistance events, including telephone/video conference calls, grantee meetings, web-based technical-assistance events, site visits, or other expected events.
- Development and endorsement of a Collaboration Charter.
- Development of a Project Focus Memo.
- All aspects of the Needs Assessment planning, implementation & reporting process.
- Production of a Strategic Plan to guide the Project.
- Additional time to actively participate in the development of all product deliverables for the Planning & Development Phase, by reviewing and editing documents, communicating by phone or email with other collaboration members, and gathering and sharing information, data, and

resources; deliverables will include: Collaboration Charter, Needs Assessment, Needs Assessment Report, Strategic Plan, and Budget Modifications.

- Each Partner commits to assess internal policies, procedures and overall agency culture.
- Each Partner further commits to plan and implement internal systemic changes, including policies and procedures, within their respective agency to best meet the goals of the Project.
- The Partners also agree to assess intra-agency protocols and to make needed changes.
- Development of interagency confidentiality policies to ensure victim safety.
- Cross-trainings to establish a shared knowledge base on which to build the project.

During the Implementation Phase all Partners commit to:

- Continuing active participation in the Planning & Development Team.
- Implementation of all Goals and Objectives identified in the Strategic Plan.
- Participation in an evaluation process.

WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM, INC. / VICTIMS ASSISTANCE SERVICES will additionally:

- As lead agency, administer the grant, manage the budget and related fiscal matters, submit Project reports, ensure that the Planning and Development Team is addressing the goals and objectives of the project and that all Partners are fulfilling their responsibilities, and oversee compliance with all requirements in order to ensure the successful execution of the Project. WESTCOP/VAS is committed to working together with all Partners to achieve project goals;
- Recruit, hire, train and supervise a Project Manager to be housed in the VAS Elmsford Office;
- Provide office space, furniture, equipment, communications, supplies, and administrative support to the Project Manager;
- Provide cross-trainings to Project Partners on sexual assault-related issues identified as relevant to the Project. Assist OFW in providing cross-trainings on domestic violence to the Partners.
- Work together with OFW to provide cross-trainings and consultations to other Partners on enhanced confidentiality protections and other “best practices” to ensure the safety and autonomy of survivors;
- Serve as technical advisor and consultant on all Project issues related to sexual assault including prevention, risk reduction, outreach, crisis intervention, safety planning, systems response, trauma-informed interventions and victim-centered advocacy.
- Work with the Partners to involve survivors and other members of the disabilities and d/Deaf communities during the Needs Assessment process and in the development of the project; ensure that the Project remains grounded in and takes leadership from both the victims-advocacy and disabilities-advocacy communities;

OFFICE FOR WOMEN (OFW) will additionally:

- Provide accessible meeting space and administrative support for the collaboration;
- Provide cross-trainings to Project Partners on domestic/intimate partner violence issues identified as relevant to the Project. Assist OFD in providing cross-trainings on intimate partner violence within the disabilities communities;
- Serve as technical advisor and consultant on all Project issues related to domestic violence including prevention, risk reduction, outreach, crisis intervention, safety planning, systems response, trauma-informed interventions and victim-centered advocacy.
- Work together with WESTCOP/VAS to design and provide cross-trainings and consultations to other Partners on enhanced confidentiality protections and other “best practices” to ensure the safety and autonomy of victim/survivors;
- Support efforts to make systemic changes in Westchester as determined by this collaboration in furtherance of the ultimate goals of this grant.

THE WESTCHESTER INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER, INC., THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE DISABLED (OFD), and the WESTCHESTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH will additionally:

- Provide guidance and expertise to the development of inter-agency and intra-agency policies and procedures, based upon their knowledge of the needs, strengths and cultural values of women with disabilities, and the disabilities-advocacy and d/Deaf communities;
- Design and provide cultural competency cross-trainings to the Collaboration with content based upon the needs, strengths and cultural values of the various disabilities communities;
- Serve as technical advisor and consultant on all Project issues related to full accessibility, including accessible educational and outreach materials, cultural competency, disabilities advocacy and person-first ethics; consult with victim services providers on appropriate communications devices, physical accessibility of services and other related technical assistance.
- Assist in recruiting and engaging persons with disabilities and D/deaf individuals during the Needs Assessment and/or in advisory capacity, to ensure that the Project is sourced from all three streams of expertise: victim advocacy, disabilities advocacy and persons with disabilities and D/deaf individuals themselves.
- Provide assistance with ASL Interpretation.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

The Westchester Safe Access Collaboration will utilize a three-point consensus decision-making model when addressing critical issues. The consensus decision-making process is based on the presentation of fact, thoughtful discussion and the consideration of all view points. Our vision, mission and values will serve as central points of reference and guide our decision-making process. We believe that sustainable agreements require that all parties involved are genuinely engaged in the decision-making process.

The Collaboration defines consensus as being full agreement and endorsement of a decision by all Partners, even when a given Partner may have *preferred* an alternate decision. The Project Manager will initiate the Decision-Making Model, but any Work Group Member may request its use.

Gradients of Agreements: Westchester Safe Access will use a three-point scale from “Agree to Disagree” to poll Work Group Members’ positions during the decision-making process.

- 1) I fully agree/ I commit fully
- 2) I agree with some reservations
- 3) I disagree/ Cannot move forward

Initiation of Polling

It is the Project Manager’s responsibility to initiate a poll using the gradients of agreement, but any Work Group Member may initiate a straw poll to determine the level of agreement/disagreement during a discussion.

Polling Method

Each Member will take turns stating her/his position on the gradient and the reason for choosing that position. The reason behind a position is the most critical part of this process and therefore we have outlined possible questions for Members (or meeting participants) to address when explaining her/his position. We believe that it’s important that our voting process is an open one, to encourage discussion and break down possible barriers.

- 1) I agree. I commit fully.
 - ✓ What do you like about the proposed decision?
- 2) I agree with some reservations. I can fully commit.
 - ✓ What aspects do you like about the proposed decision?
 - ✓ What information do you need?
 - ✓ What are your reservations?
 - ✓ What would need to change for you to fully agree?
- 3) I disagree/I cannot move forward.
 - ✓ What is your alternate suggestion?
 - ✓ What aspects do you like/dislike about the proposed decision?
 - ✓ What would need to change for you to be able to commit?
 - ✓ What solution would you suggest?

Decision-Making

- Our Collaboration agrees that consensus has been met if all members vote 1.
- Our Collaboration can move forward if all members are at least at 2. Therefore the Work Group will consider the context of the decision and the expressed reservations in deciding either to table the issue for further discussion at a specified future date or to immediately move forward.
- Our Collaboration will not move forward with a decision if any member is at a 3. We will either table the decision for further discussion or, if a decision must be made, refer to our conflict resolution process.
- Interns are excluded from the voting process.

Revisiting Decisions

A decision may be revisited at the request of any Work Group Member, who will state the reason for re-opening discussion as well as any new information or perspectives. The Work Group will determine, by consensus, whether to make changes to the decision.

DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY

We have designated decision-making authority purposefully to specific Members of our Collaboration (See Appendix II), taking into consideration each organization's internal decision-making structure, and individual agency concerns regarding liability issues and mission congruence.

Work Group Members are given the authority to, by consensus:

- Set the direction of the Collaboration's work including its vision, mission and philosophies.
- Work with the Fiscal Manager to determine how to allocate discretionary grant funds.
- Determine the ideal qualities of Work Group Members and Project Manager for the success of the project, and provide input to Administration (Levels One and Two) regarding selection of new Work Group Members and/or Project Manager.
- Determine the collaboration work process including the setting of priorities and timelines, determining the schedule and length of meetings, etc.
- Initiate decision-making and conflict resolution process.
- Review and request changes to agenda and minutes.
- Reflect on and evaluate the group process, the Project Manager's performance and her/his own performance.
- Determine when internal and external stakeholders, including Vera and OVW, should be consulted in regards to the development of deliverables.
- Approve deliverables prior to sending to Vera and OVW.
- Represent the collaboration to other grantees in situations such as all-grantee meetings.
- Ensure that Administration Levels One and Two are informed of the progress of the Work Group.

The Project Manager is given authority to:

- Manage the administrative aspects of the project.
- Create agendas with Work Group Member input.
- Schedule meetings with Work Group input.
- Prepare materials for meetings.
- Assign tasks to Work Group Members.
- Provide the administration of TeamWorkpm, our Project Management site.
- Facilitate meetings.
- Serve as conduit of all intra-Partner communications.
- Initiate conflict resolution and decision-making process.
- Reflect on and evaluate the group process, his/her own performance and the overall performance of Work Group.
- Initiate contact with OVW and Vera.
- Submit drafted deliverables to Vera.
- Submit final deliverables to OVW after approval by both Work Group and Administrative Levels One and Two.
- Submit OVW progress reports.
- Make arrangements for OVW and/or Vera site visits.
- Represent the collaboration to other grantees in situations such as the project director listserv, conference calls and all-grantee meetings.

Administration Levels One and Two

The Westchester Safe Access Collaborative believes that there are two levels of leadership needed for final decisions. Commitment at the most influential levels of each organization—including Partners/County Executive/Legislature—will ensure sustainable systemic change.

Administration Level One: members include partner agency leaders (Commissioner of Community Mental Health, Director of Office for the Disabled, and Director of Office for Women, Director of VAS, and Executive Director of WILC). These Members are given the authority to:

- Determine their organization’s Work Group Member(s), with input from the Work Group about the qualities of the representative that would best fit the work of the collaboration.
- Hire/appoint, supervise, and (with input from the Work Group) remove their organization’s representative from the project.
- Sign MOUs with approval from Administration Level Two.
- Review and approve policies and project budgets for their respective organizations.
- Approve how the strategic plan is implemented within their organizations.
- Participate in conflict resolution process as needed.
- Agree on final products for approval by Administration Level Two.

Administration Level Two: members include WILC and WestCOP Boards of Directors, WestCOP Chief Executive Officer, and Westchester County Executive and/or Legislature. These members have the authority and responsibility to:

- Approve MOUs and consultant contracts.
- Approve systemic changes proposed by the Collaboration Work Group, including changes to internal policies, procedures and protocols.

Fiscal Manager (WestCOP/VAS) is given the authority to:

- Monitor and administer the project budget.
- Consult with the Work Group to determine allocation of grant funds.
- Submit fiscal reports to OVW.
- Provides fiscal information and support to partner agencies.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PLAN

The Westchester Safe Access Collaboration accepts that conflict is natural and will occur:

- We commit to using non-violent and ethical communication.
- We respect the unique perspective that each member brings.
- We will strive to use our differences to gain deeper understanding of our work together.
- We will look at conflict as an opportunity to find common ground.
- We agree that project-related conflicts, and the conflict resolution process, will not influence inter-agency relationships outside of the collaboration.

Steps to Conflict Resolution

Members of the Collaboration agree to the following:

1. To directly address issues and conflicts within Work Group meetings as soon as they are identified.
2. To follow our decision making strategy using the consensus gradients.
3. To use open and direct communication when discussing concerns.
4. To accept that there will be differences of opinion and to focus on areas of agreement whenever possible.
5. When agreement is not possible, to table discussion for one week to allow members to research their position and talk over the issue at hand within their agency.
6. If a conflict is not resolved through steps 1-5, the Project Manager will work to mediate the conflict.
 - The Project Manager can utilize the following questions to assist in her/his analysis:
 - Who are all the people with stakes in this conflict?
 - What are the power relationships among the individuals?
 - What gender or cultural differences need to be considered?
 - Is the conflict interpersonal or is it substantive?
 - Is it a product of agency/system culture or policy?
 - The Project Manager will then choose from among the following interventions, based upon her assessment:
 - Meetings with individual Work Group members
 - Meetings with subsets of Work Group members
 - Involving Administrative Levels One and/or Two
 - Consulting with technical advisors (Vera)
 - Use of technical advisors (Vera) as mediator
7. If the issue remains unresolved and the Project Manager has not utilized Vera as mediator, a majority vote of the Work Group to bring Vera in as mediator must be followed.
8. If agreement is not reached through mediation (with one or more Vera staff), then the Project Manager or Lead Agency will contact the Office on Violence against Women.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT & MANDATED REPORTING

The Collaboration recognizes that confidentiality is the cornerstone of effective work with survivors of violence. We also recognize that each Partner agency has its own internal confidentiality policies and is guided by its own understanding of professional ethics, and that Partners are also impacted by the confidentiality requirements of funders and through state and federal regulations. We realize that these differences can impact Partners' ability to freely share information with each other, and that Partners have differing legal responsibilities to break confidentiality when specific information is disclosed in a professional setting.

We also recognize that the success of the Collaboration depends upon the Partners' willingness to share sensitive information about their agencies' internal policies, procedures and cultures, without fear that that information will be shared outside of Collaborative meetings. We further understand that Partners may at times speak of their own survivorship, in order to illustrate concerns.

And finally, we understand that through our collaborative process, we may begin to make cross-referrals for survivor services, and that the Needs Assessment may well include survivor stories.

For these reasons, we have developed a Partner Confidentiality Agreement (see Appendix III) that specifically addresses:

- 1) All Information Shared within the Collaborative Work Group Process
- 2) Internal Partner Agency Information
- 3) Personal information shared within the Collaborative process
- 4) Information shared about identifiable Project participants, including in negotiating cross referrals and in the Needs Assessment Process.

The Confidentiality Agreement shall be re-signed annually.

Survivor Confidentiality

Partners understand that confidentiality is crucial in terms of survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. In addition to this we recognize that the disability community is a smaller community, where a survivor can be easily identified by service providers. Disclosing information, as it relates to clients, should never be taken lightly, and we recognize that there have been laws and legislation passed in order to protect individuals rights to confidentiality. All partners and participants (Staff/Interns/Contractors) will have to sign the collaboration's confidentiality form, to ensure that Survivor information is remaining confidential.

The Collaboration understands that there may be cross referrals between and among Partner agencies, as a result of our working together. In those instances, the sharing of survivor information will be guided by each Partner's internal confidentiality policies. However, within Collaborative meetings, the Partners agree not to discuss confidential survivor information, whether or not a survivor's name is used. Case examples used for educational purposes will never use survivors' names. Other identifying markers, such as ethnicity, age, or date of birth, will be used cautiously; all partners have agreed to consider these questions before discussing any survivor specific scenarios within the collaboration:

- What is the intent?
- Is it helpful to the Survivor/Collaboration?

- Does it matter?

Mandated Reporting

Some members of the Westchester Safe Access Collaboration fall under New York State Mandated Reporting regulations (see Appendix IV). However, not all Partner agencies are mandated reporters as designated within those regulations. Partners will follow their internal guidelines regarding mandated reporting. The following Westchester Safe Access Collaboration organizations are mandated reporters: WESTCOP/VAS employees, DCMH employees and the Project Manager, as a WestCOP/VAS employee.

Given that Westchester Safe Access Work Group members have differing responsibilities to report abuse, we have agreed to make every effort not to discuss identifiable survivor information in our Work Group meetings. However, in the event that an identifiable disclosure is made in the presence of a Partner who is mandated to report such abuse, it is agreed and understood that that person will follow their agency's reporting procedure.

The Collaboration will continue to openly discuss our mandated reporting regulations as we move forward with our work and the needs assessment. The collaboration will inform participants in our focus groups that if they disclose personal information about possible abuse or neglect that we may need to share this information with appropriate agencies. During the needs assessment planning process a more detailed protocol regarding mandated reporting will be created.

If, as a result of Collaboration communications, a Partner judges that he/she must make a mandated report, the Partner will notify the Westchester Safe Access Project Manager that they have done so.

Effective June 30, 2013 the NYS Protection of People with Special Needs Act (see Appendix IV) went into effect and it remains unclear at this moment as to how this law will affect the Partners. The Partner agencies have not yet been trained on how this new mandate will affect our work with survivors, and until then we are moving forward with caution. Once Partner members have been informed and trained, the Collaboration will revisit this and its impact on our work.

The Collaboration has recognized the following New York State statutes that limit the Partners' ability to maintain confidentiality:

- N.Y. SOS. LAW § 413 : NY Code – Section 413:
 - Persons and officials required to report cases of suspected child abuse or maltreatment
- The Protection of People with Special Needs Act/Chapter 501 of the Laws of 2012

The chart in Appendix V shows the status of individual Work Group Members vis a vis their duty to report abuse of minors, elders and/or vulnerable persons. This chart will be used as a guide when we begin our needs assessment so that facilitators can be chosen to best provide an environment conducive to survivor safety, empowerment and disclosure.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Westchester Safe Access believes that the success of our Collaboration depends upon full Partner participation and honest, open, respectful, timely and efficient communication. We recognize that we will work best together by maintaining direct and transparent communication with each other. We strive to promote a positive message and discourage defensiveness and hostility. All of our conversations will be based on People-First language that values the person and her/his strengths.

This communications plan outlines how Project Westchester Safe Access will achieve and maintain effective communication. We believe that effective communication will build teamwork and provide clarity for all partners that are involved. We seek to outline the structure for keeping the Work Group members informed as progress towards project goals is being made; for that reason we identify our communication process as follows:

Full Participation: We agree to monitor and respond to all Project-related communications, following the guidelines below. We each agree to initiate communication as needed.

Open: We agree to include all relevant Partner representatives in Project-related communications and to allow sufficient time for all relevant Partner representatives to express themselves.

Respectful: Our communications will be based upon our belief that all Partners are well-meaning and come to the table with a genuine wish for the Project to succeed.

Honest: We agree to engage in frank and honest communication, and, for the good of the Project, to approach rather than to avoid difficult and/or potentially conflictual topics.

Efficient: recognizing that all Partners have complex non-Westchester Safe Access roles and lead busy work lives, we agree that project communications should be concise and on point, and that communications that are extraneous or only tangentially related to the Project should be clearly labeled as optional.

Work Group (In-Person) Meetings: Substantive discussions and decisions regarding our philosophies, the direction of our work, and deliverables, as well as relationship building and conflict resolution, will take place primarily in person, within Work Group Meetings. The Work Group will decide by consensus to use alternate technology as needed. Work Group meetings are defined as face-to-face meetings. Although we include the option for one member at a time to conference into the meeting, we do not use the term “meeting” to include conference calls and on-line interactions.

The Work Group will meet weekly during the initial development phase. We will meet as needed after that, but no less than once per month. Decisions for changing the overall meeting schedule will be determined by consensus.

The Work Group will identify topics that require the presence of all members to discuss during a meeting. The guiding principle is that topics which Work Group identify as possibly resulting in strong differences in opinion should be discussed only if all Work Group Members are present.

Additional meetings may take place as needed for approval of documents and decision making.

Meetings will start when the majority of expected Members are present, but no later than 10 to 15 minutes after the start time. If the majority of Members are not present at that time, a decision will be made by Members who are present whether to start the meeting, wait for a majority of members, or cancel the meeting per our Decision Making model.

If a Work Group member cannot attend a scheduled meeting, the meeting will take place as planned. If no representative from the organization is available to attend, the meeting will be rescheduled or cancelled based on a consensus decision of the entire partnership.

If a Work Group member cannot attend a scheduled meeting, it is the responsibility of the agency partner present at the meeting to bring back the information and disseminate it to their agencies Work Group member.

If lead agency and/or Project Manager are not able to attend a meeting, the meeting will be canceled.

The Project Manager will create and distribute agendas and email to the work group at least one business day prior to the meeting for review. At the end of each meeting members will be asked if they have agenda items to add, and have the opportunity at any time to send agenda items to Project Manager to be added.

Work Group Members will adhere to the ground rules (see Appendix VI)

Project Manager is responsible for taking meeting minutes. Project Manager will distribute minutes via email within three days of the meeting. The Project Manager will keep a record of "Milestones" that will serve to maintain a historical record of the decisions made and the accomplishments achieved for Project Gateway. The milestones will be kept at Teamworkpm.com.

Collaboration minutes are confidential and are only to be shared with Westchester Safe Access collaboration partners, including Administration levels One and Two.

Work Group members are responsible for reviewing agenda and documents, and coming prepared for discussions.

Outside of Work Group meetings, email will be the preferred method of communication among partners. Additional communication will be accomplished through phone contact and meeting one-one-one, as necessary.

If a Work Group member has scheduled a vacation time that coincides with a meeting day, the Work Group member has to notify the Project Manager of their schedule as soon as possible.

Meetings are considered confidential in order to foster open and honest communication.

Email Communication: General project-related communications will take place via email. Email will also be used as an alternative to the Teamwork Project Management site for managing documents under review. Work Group communications will be emailed to Work Group Members only, unless Administration One & Two are included for substantive reasons. Work Group Members agree to reply to all emails in a timely manner (within 16 "work" hours of receipt). The Work Group members will forward email they would like to share with other partners to Project Manager for distribution. The Work Group recognizes that there are different types of information that can be distributed to the work group and the emails will be identified in the subject line of the emails as follows:

ELECTIVE Non-Project Webinars, Articles, Partner Events, etc.

Phone Communication: Telephone communications will NOT be used in place of email, but may be used for the following reasons:

- Conferencing in to a WORK GROUP Meeting as needed
- Work-related communication between two Members
- Time-sensitive information sharing
- Relationship building and/or addressing potentially sensitive topics between two Partners

- Communicating lateness, absence and/or last minute meeting changes

Text Messaging: Westchester Safe Access will not use text messaging for general collaboration business, as not all Members have texting ability. Texting may only be used for emergency communications and partners have to identify with Project Manager their preference for this method of communication. Work Group members understand that if personal cell phones are used, they have to follow their agency's internal protocols regarding possible reimbursement procedure.

Teamwork: On-Line Project Management Site: The Project Manager will maintain a calendar with meeting schedule, vacations, and other dates when members are unavailable to attend meetings on Westchester Safe Access TeamWork website. Team Members will input their own vacation time and other anticipated absences into the calendar and will notify the Project Manager of additions/changes made. The Project Manager will add assigned tasks to the Task List. All members are responsible for checking-off their tasks when completed.

Resignation/New Representative if a work group member is unable continue to participate in the Collaboration s/he will notify Project Manager and the partners as soon as possible. The Project Manager will schedule a meeting with Administration Level One and/or Two to discuss/assist/identify a new representative for the Collaboration. The Collaboration may decide by consensus if meetings shall continue until a new representative is available, this furthermore depends on agency representation at the table. A new representative will have to schedule individual meetings with partner agency members within four weeks to get oriented to the vision, mission and values of respective partners and the Collaboration.

Interns: The Westchester Safe Access welcomes Interns to be part of the collaboration process. Interns are required to go through the same orientation steps as identified in the New Representative section. Interns can help with all project tasks, however, are excluded from the voting process.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The Collaboration Partners agree that the following guidelines will be used in all Westchester Safe Access communications with external stakeholders, in order to ensure that all such communications are aligned with the Project vision, mission, and values. External stakeholders include Vera, OVW and community partners. Collaboration communications with the Media will also be considered external communications. External communications request form and talking points for the Collaboration and Partner agencies can be found in Appendix VII.

VERA

- Vera serves as the Collaboration's Technical Adviser and will have frequent contact with the collaboration. Project Manager is the designated primary contact person for Vera for all incoming and outgoing communication.
- Project Manager will have phone conference contact with the Vera Technical Adviser at a minimum of twice a month to review progress, feedback, and guidance.
- Project Manager will represent Westchester Safe Access Collaboration at monthly Project Director Phone Conferences hosted by VERA and other Project Directors/Managers/Coordinators.

OVW

- The Project Manager will be primary communications contact with the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW).

- The Lead Agency (WestCOP/VAS) will also communicate with OVW on matters related to fiscal oversight. The Lead Agency is also responsible for forwarding grant reports and requests for budget modifications.
- The Project Manager is responsible for submitting deliverables for final approval and reporting feedback to team members.
- The Project Manager will submit to OVW any press releases, press conferences or website publications for approval prior to their release.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS are identified as the people who are impacted by our work, such as survivors, persons with disabilities, non-Partner service providers, other OVW grantees, community allies, and others.

- The Project Manager is the primary contact person for communication with external stakeholders.
- The Project Manager may delegate requests for information to appropriate Partner(s).
- Partners may provide information about the Westchester Safe Access Collaboration, using approved talking points.
- All requests for Westchester Safe Access participation in community forums, events, etc. must be approved by the Collaboration and the external communications form filled out and submitted to Project Manager for record keeping.

MEDIA The collaboration recognizes that there are three different types of media communications: proactive, reactive and crisis communications.

Proactive Communication is used when our collaboration is sending outgoing communication to the media and/or public to highlight our work. **Reactive Communication** is used when our collaboration receives a request for information about our Project from the media or an external stakeholder.

- The Point Person for all proactive and reactive communication is the Project Manager.
- The Lead Agency (WestCOP/VAS) is the designated primary spokesperson for media related inquiries, as it relates to the Collaboration. Either the VAS Director or the Project Manager may fill this role.
- Partner agencies may initiate communication on behalf of Gateway, but must use preapproved talking points. The talking points will be updated as needed.
- Media contact is to be documented and sent to the Project Manager in a timely manner, and the Project Manager will notify all Partners.
- Any request for information outside of the approved talking points will be referred to the Project Manager. The external communication form is to be filled out and stored with Project Manager for record keeping.

Crisis Communication: prejudicial to Westchester Safe Access and/or impacts the integrity of the Collaboration or partner agencies. If a crisis occurs, all communication requests will be directed to the crisis communication point person within that organization as already designated.

- VAS: Director
- WILC: Executive Director
- OFW: Director/Senior Manager
- OFD: Director
- DCMH: Acting Commissioner

- If the organization's communication point person receives information on a crisis related to the other organizations, they will immediately notify the Project Manager, who will be responsible for notifying the point persons at the other organizations as well as all collaboration members.
- The Project Manager will continue with phone calls until a live person is reached to communicate the crisis information.
- In event of an emergency or crisis situation regarding a survivor with disabilities, the Project Manager will serve as the point of contact as well, but will confer with partner leadership (as identified above) to ensure that the integrity and voice of the collaboration is maintained.

WORK PLAN TIMELINE

Westchester Safe Access Work Plan;

This is a timeline that will help guide the major activities of the collaboration. It will be reviewed and revised by consensus as needed by the members of the collaboration.

Work Plan		
Activity	Timeframe	Target Completion
Hire a Project Manager	December 2012- February 2013	February 2013
New Grantee Orientation	January 2013	January 2013
Vera Site Visit	April-May 2013	May 2013
Building Collaboration/ Collaboration Charter	January – September 2013	September 2013
Needs Assessment Planning	September – October 2013	
Conduct Needs Assessment	November – December 2013	
Needs Assessment Report	January 2014	
Compile findings and analyze themes	January – April 2014	
Write needs assessment report	May – June 2014	
Vera Site Visit/Strategic Plan	July 2014	
Create Strategic Plan	August – September 2014	
Implement Strategic Plan	September 2014-2015	

KEY TERMS

Abuse:

Actions with or without physical contact that cause harm. It is to harm or injure by maltreatment, neglect and improper use of power or resources.

Administration One:

Refers to VAS/Director, WILC Executive Director, DCMH Commissioner, OFW Director, OFD Director

Administration Two:

Refers to WestCOP CEO/Board, WILC Board Members, DCMH, OFD, and OFW Westchester County Executive/Legislators.

Advocacy:

Providing liaison services or active intervention with community services on behalf of survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence with disabilities. By definition, advocacy is supporting a cause, group or person. The following definitions provide a description of the advocacy services provided under this Framework:

- Disability advocacy enables people with disability to participate in the decision making processes that safeguard and advance their human rights.
- Individual advocacy supports people with disabilities to exercise their rights, through either one-to-one support, or by supporting people to advocate for themselves individually, through a third party or on a group basis.
- Systemic advocacy seeks to introduce and influence longer term changes to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are attained and upheld to positively affect the quality of their lives.
- Disability advocacy promotes the interests and wellbeing of people with disabilities and promotes their full and valued inclusion as contributing and participating members of the community;
- Disability advocacy ensures that views represented meet the individual preferences, goals and needs of people with disabilities;
- Disability advocacy strengthens the capacity of people with disabilities to speak for themselves by actively supporting and encouraging self-advocacy;
- Disability advocacy recognizes and respects the diversity of people with disabilities
- Disability advocacy ensures that the rights of people with disabilities to privacy, dignity and confidentiality are recognized and upheld. (OFD/WILC)

American with Disabilities Act:

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, State and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. It also mandates the establishment of TDD/telephone relay services.

Caregiver:

A person who is responsible for the direct care, protection, supervision and tending to the needs of a person with a disability.

Collaboration:

A partnership of community agencies and county government that will ultimately end in systemic change within both organizations by focusing on mutual goals and objectives that one organization alone could not achieve.

Confidentiality:

The ethical principle that a professional will hold all client information not intended to be disclosed to third parties in confidence, unless the individual gives consent permitting disclosure or unless the disclosure is required by the law.

Consensus:

Is a group decision making process that seeks the consent of all partners. Consensus may be an acceptable resolution, one that can be supported, even if not the “favorite” of each individual.

Culturally Competent:

Refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds, particularly within the context of agencies whose employees work with persons of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. We believe that cultural competence is comprised of four components:

1. Awareness of one’s own cultural world view;
2. Attitudes towards cultural differences;
3. Knowledge of different cultural practices and world views and
4. Cross-cultural skills

Disability:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has a three-part definition of disability. Under ADA, an individual with a disability is a person who: (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; OR (2) has a record of such impairment; OR (3) is regarded as having such impairment.

- A physical impairment is defined by ADA as “any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory (including speech organs), cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hematic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine.”
- Neither ADA nor the regulations that implement it list all the diseases or conditions that are covered, because it would be impossible to provide a comprehensive list, given the variety of possible impairments.

Domestic Violence:

A pattern of behaviors used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner that can include physical and sexual violence, emotional or psychological abuse and economic deprivation. It may also be referred to as abuse, battering, dating violence/abuse or intimate partner violence.

Empowerment/Model:

To promote the self-actualization of another human being. An Empowerment Model *encourages* people to gain the skills and knowledge that will allow them to overcome obstacles in life or work environment and ultimately, help them develop within themselves or in the society.

Inclusive:

Honoring the right of all persons to participate in society in a full way, Equal Access for Everyone.

Informed Consent:

Permission granted for services and/or information sharing, with full knowledge of the possible risks and benefits.

Independence:

Living, working and playing just like everyone else—having opportunities to make decisions that affect one's life, able to pursue activities of one's own choosing—limited only in the same ways that one's neighbors who are not disabled are limited.

Intimate Partner Violence:

Our collaboration will use this term interchangeably with domestic violence. Please refer to our Domestic Violence definition.

Severe Mental Illness:

For the purposes of our project we have defined serious mental illness as a group of disorders effecting individuals 18 yrs or older who have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness such as but not limited to schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder, major depression, post traumatic stress disorder and with significant impairment in at least two of the following areas: self-care, activities of daily living, social functioning ,and frequent difficulties in concentration resulting in failure to complete tasks in a timely manner in work, home, or school setting.

OVW:

Office on Violence against Women is a component of the U.S. Department of Justice. OVW provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to reduce violence against women and

administer justice for and strengthens services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Oppression:

The combination of prejudice and institutional power which creates a system that discriminates against some groups (often called “target groups”) and benefits other groups (often called “dominant groups”). Examples of these systems are ableism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ageism, and anti-Semitism. These systems enable dominant groups to exert control over target groups by limiting their rights, freedom, and access to basic resources such as health care, education, employment, and housing.

Four Levels of Oppression/“isms” and Change:

- **Personal:** Values, Beliefs, Feelings
- **Interpersonal:** Actions, Behaviors, Language
- **Institutional:** Rules, Policies, Procedures
- **Cultural:** Beauty, Truth, Right

Participants:

This is the common language we choose to use for persons who take part in the needs assessments and their activities of the collaboration.

Person-Centered:

Activities, services, and supports based upon an individual’s interests, preferences, choices and strengths.

People/Person-First:

People/Person-first philosophy defines who the person “is” before defining what disability the person may have. People-First language refers to persons with disabilities rather than disabled people

Self-Determination:

The individual’s right to make informed decisions.

Sexual Assault:

Any non-consensual or coerced sexual activity.

Sexual Violence:

Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.

Survivor:

This collaboration chooses to use the term survivor when referring to the primary individual who has been abused; however, this definition is used with caution, as we do not intend to determine where a survivor is in their healing process or how they choose their identity as a result of the violence they have experienced.

Systemic Change:

The goal of this work is to institute policy changes throughout Westchester County, with respect to accessibility, procedures and protocols in working with persons with disabilities who are also survivors of sexual assault and/or domestic violence.

Trauma-Informed:

To be informed about, and sensitive to, trauma related issues present in survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence.

Vera:

The Vera Institute of Justice serves as the Collaborations Technical Advisers during the 3 year grant year. Vera combines expertise in research, demonstration projects, and technical assistance to help leaders in government and civil society improve the systems people rely on for justice and safety.

Work Group Member:

Refers to Project Manager, VAS Director, WILC Staff, OFD Director/Staff, OFW Senior Manager/Staff, DCMH Commissioner/Staff.

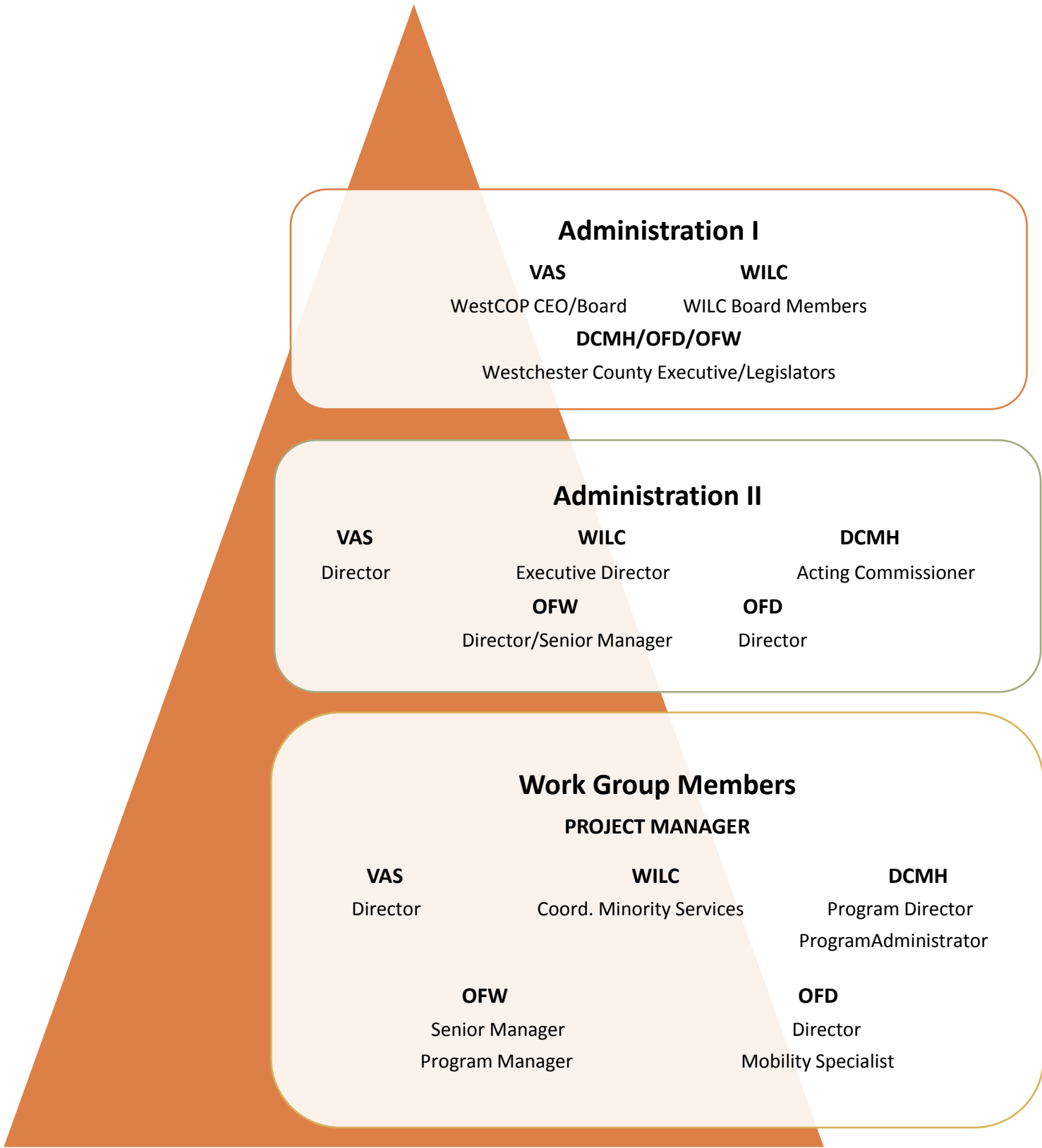
APPENDIX

APPENDIX I

COLLABORATION MEMBERS

Rebecka Palmer, BSW Project Manager	Victims Assistance Services, a component of WESTCOP,INC. 2269 Saw Mill River Road, Bldg 3 Elmsford, NY 10523	914-592-5600 ext 106 914-345-3113 rpalmer@westcop.org www.westcop.org
John S. Savage Interim Chief Executive Officer	Westchester Community Opportunity Program, INC. 2269 Saw Mill River Road, Bldg 3 Elmsford, NY 10523	914-372-3582 914-592-0021 jsavage@westcop.org www.westcop.org
May Krukiel, MA, MEd Director	Victims Assistance Services, a component of WESTCOP,INC. 2269 Saw Mill River Road, Bldg 3 Elmsford, NY 10523	914-345-3113 914-345-3513 mkrukiel@westcop.org www.westcop.org
Joe Bravo, MBA Executive Director	Westchester Independent Living Center 200 Hamilton Avenue White Plains, NY 10601	(914) 682-3926 (914) 682-8518 jbravo@wilc.org www.wilc.org
Tamaris Princi, LMSW Minority Services	Westchester Independent Living Center 200 Hamilton Avenue White Plains, NY 10601	(914) 682-3926 (914) 682-8518 tprinci@wilc.org www.wilc.org
Robi Schlaff, ESQ Director	Westchester County Office for Women 112 East Post Road White Plains, NY 10601	(914) 995-5976 (914) 995-5054 rschlaff@westchestergov.com www.westchestergov.com
Diane Balistreri, BA Senior Manager	Westchester County Office for Women 112 East Post Road White Plains, NY 10601	(914) 995-5972 (914) 995-5054 dgb2@westchestergov.com www.westchestergov.com
Thea DuBow, MS Program Manager	Westchester County Office for Women 112 East Post Road White Plains, NY 10601	(914) 995-5972 (914) 995-5054 trd1@westchestergov.com www.westchestergov.com
Evan Latainer, MA Director	Westchester County Office for Disabled 148 Martine Avenue, 102 White Plains, NY 10601	(914) 995 - 2957 (914) 995-2799 ehl2@westchestergov.com www.westchestergov.com
Anna Masopust Mobility Specialist	Westchester County Office for Disabled 148 Martine Avenue, 102 White Plains, NY 10601	(914) 995-2957 (914) 995-2799 ammi@westchestergov.com www.westchestergov.com

Melissa Staats, MA, MSW Acting Commissioner	Westchester County Department of Community of Mental Health 112 East Post Road White Plains, NY 10601	(914) 995-5220 (914) 995-6220 mms5@westchestergov.com www.westchestergov.com
Annette Peters-Ruvolo, LCSW Program Director for Community Support Services	Westchester County Department of Community of Mental Health 112 East Post Road White Plains, NY 10601	(914) 995-5220 (914) 995-6220 apr@westchestergov.com www.westchestergov.com
Michelle Hart, MA Program Administrator	Westchester County Department of Community of Mental Health 112 East Post Road White Plains, NY 10601	(914) 995-5220 (914) 995-6220 mah5@westchestergov.com www.westchestergov.com



Administration I

VAS

WestCOP CEO/Board

WILC

WILC Board Members

DCMH/OFD/OFW

Westchester County Executive/Legislators

Administration II

VAS

Director

WILC

Executive Director

DCMH

Acting Commissioner

OFW

Director/Senior Manager

OFD

Director

Work Group Members

PROJECT MANAGER

VAS

Director

WILC

Coord. Minority Services

DCMH

Program Director
Program Administrator

OFW

Senior Manager
Program Manager

OFD

Director
Mobility Specialist

WESTCHESTER SAFE ACCESS Partner Confidentiality Agreement

It is the shared policy of Westchester Safe Access to keep confidential: all communications, observations and information concerning both our collaboration and our participants.

This confidentiality agreement applies to:

- 1) All Information Shared within the Collaborative Work Group Process
- 2) Internal Partner Agency Information
- 3) Personal information shared within the Collaborative process
- 4) Information shared about identifiable Project participants, including in negotiating cross referrals and in the Needs Assessment Process

For the purposes of this Agreement, confidentiality is defined as the assurance that information shall be strictly shared, and that violations will be a breach of faith. Information shared will not be used for purposes that were not intended when the information was provided. This pertains to project communications, written or spoken information related to participants, and all Westchester Safe Access records.

Reading and signing this Agreement is required of every Westchester Safe Access Partner representative, (including any Partner agency staff participating in Westchester Safe Access work). By signing this agreement, the signer acknowledges that he/she has completely read and understands Westchester Safe Access Confidentiality policy.

Westchester Safe Access Partner

Date

Westchester Safe Access Agency Staff/Intern member

Date

Westchester Safe Access Project Manager

Date

To stay current – please follow these links for more information regarding our mandated laws.

N.Y. SOS. LAW § 413 : NY Code – Section 413:

Persons and officials required to report cases of suspected child abuse or maltreatment

<http://codes.lp.findlaw.com/nycode/SOS/6/6/413#sthash.1vDVPkEJ.dpuf>

Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment when they are presented with a **reasonable cause** to suspect child abuse or maltreatment in a situation where a child, parent, or other person legally responsible for the child is before the mandated reporter when the mandated reporter is acting in his or her official or professional capacity. "Other person legally responsible" refers to a guardian, caretaker, or other person 18 years of age or older who is responsible for the care of the child.

Mandated reporters who are social services workers have expanded reporting requirements. Social services workers are required to report when, in their official or professional role, they are presented with a reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment where **any person** is before the mandated reporter and the mandated reporter is acting in his or her official or professional capacity. Additional information can be found at

NYS Office for Children and Family Services <http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/publications/pub1159text.asp>

PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ACT

<http://www.nysmandatedreporter.org/NYSJusticeCenter.aspx>

The Protection of People with Special Needs Act (Act) requires persons who are Mandated Reporters under that Act to report Abuse, Neglect and Significant Incidents involving vulnerable persons to the Vulnerable Persons' Central Register (VPCR) operated by the . Under the Act, persons who are mandated reporters to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment are also mandated reporters to the VPCR, with the exception of day care providers and staff. Day care providers and staff are mandated reporters to the SCR, but not to the VPCR. Effective June 30, 2013, persons who are Mandated Reporters under the Act have a legal duty to:

- Report to the Justice Center, by calling the VPCR at 1 (855) 373-2122, if they have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect of a Vulnerable Person, including any person receiving residential services in a facility operated by, or provider agency facility licensed or certified by, the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).
- Report all Significant Incidents regarding vulnerable persons to the Justice Center by calling the VPCR at 1 (855) 373-2122.
- Continue to call the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment if they have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or maltreatment of children in family and foster homes, and day care settings. Suspicion of child abuse or maltreatment in a day care setting, foster care, or within a family home must continue to be reported to the Statewide Center Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment at 1 (800) 635-1522.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORK (NASW) CODE OF ETHICS

<https://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp>

Professional ethics are the core of social work. The NASW Code of Ethics offers a set of values, principles and standards to guide decision-making and everyday professional conduct of social workers. It is relevant to all social workers and social work students regardless of their specific functions or settings. The *Code* was last revised in 1999 and is currently used by most social work licensing boards.

Rebecka Palmer, BSW Victims Assistance Services, a component of WestCOP, Inc	Project Manager	N.Y. SOS. LAW § 413 : NY Code – Section 413: NASW Code of Ethics
May Krukiel, MA,MED Victims Assistance Services, a component of WestCOP.Inc	Director	N.Y. SOS. LAW § 413 : NY Code – Section 413:
Melissa Staats, MSW Department of Community Mental Health	Active Commissioner	N.Y. SOS. LAW § 413 : NY Code – Section 413: NASW Code of Ethics
Michelle Hart, MA Mental Health Courts	Program Administrator	N.Y. SOS. LAW § 413 : NY Code – Section 413:
Annette Peters-Ruvolo, LCSW Department of Community Mental Health	Program Director	N.Y. SOS. LAW § 413 : NY Code – Section 413: NASW Code of Ethics
Joe Bravo, MBA Westchester Independent Living Center	Executive Director	
Tamaris Princi, MSW Westchester Independent Living Center	Minority Services	N.Y. SOS. LAW § 413 : NY Code – Section 413: NASW Code of Ethics
Robi Schlaff, ESQ Office for Women	Director	
Diane Balistreri, BA Office for Women	Senior Manager	
Thea DuBow, MS Office for Women	Program Administrator	
Evan Latainer, BS Office for Disabled	Director	
Anna Masopust Office for Disabled	Mobility Specialist	

Ground rules are a code of behavior that help facilitate the group process, not having ground rules established early on is *assuming* that everyone think alike. Ground rules articulate a set of behaviors established by the group members to conduct themselves accordingly while attending meetings. In order for our meetings to be effective, it is important that we are all unified and that we hold ourselves accountable to the group standards.

- Listen actively and attentively.
- Ask for clarification if you are confused.
- Do not interrupt one another.
- Do not offer opinions without supporting evidence.
- Take responsibility for the quality of the discussion.
- Build on one another's comments; work toward shared understanding.
- Do not monopolize discussion.
- If you are offended by anything said during discussion, acknowledge it immediately.
- Consider anything that is said in our meetings are confidential.
- It's ok to disagree, respectfully and openly.
- Listen as an ally and with an open mind.
- Only one person speaks at a time.
- Honor the limitations of time, speak concisely.
 - If you state a problem, try to offer a solution.
 - Please put cell phones on vibrate or turn them off.
 - If you must take a cell phone call, please leave the room quietly.
- If you have or anticipate an emergency, please make an announcement at the beginning of the meeting if possible.
- Accept the fact that there will be differences of opinion.
- Show mutual respect.
- We will honor brainstorming without being attached to our own viewpoint.
- Be free to speak minds without fear of reprisal. Don't worry about politically correctness.
- Identify pending issues and agreements at end of meeting.
- Assist team members when they call for help.
- Express your feelings in a healthy manner.
- Be objective.
- Be on time.
- Be positive; possibility driven.
- Individual discussion, not required by the team, is held outside of the meetings.
- Amnesty
- Reset thinking from me to we.
- Respond with ideas or possibilities.
- Correct misuse of language; accept correction as misuse of language.

WESTCHESTER SAFE ACCESS

- **Westchester Safe Access** is a partnership among county and non-for-profit organizations which has come together to identify and create sustainable, systemic changes within our organizations that will result in improved accessibility for servicers of sexual and/or domestic violence for persons with disabilities and D/Deaf persons.
- **Westchester Safe Access** includes the lead agency Victims Assistance Services, a component of WestCOP, Inc, Westchester Independent Living Center, Westchester County Office for Women, Westchester County Office for the Disabled and Westchester Department of Community Mental Health.
- **Westchester Safe Access** is a 3-year grant funded by the United States Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). The Collaboration was awarded the grant in October 2012 and the grant will continue through September 2015.
- **Westchester Safe Access** is *not* a direct services grant, rather to identify and create sustainable, systemic changes within the partner organizations that will result in improved accessibility and sexual/domestic violence services for persons with disabilities and D/deaf Communities.

The two phases of the grant:

Planning & Development Phase: Four components: creation of a collaboration charter, a community needs assessment, a report on the findings, and the completion of a strategic plan.

Implementation Phase: Follows the strategic plan to make needed organizational changes that will maximize accessibility, safety, choice, and services for Survivors of sexual/domestic violence with disabilities and D/deaf persons.

- The purpose of the collaboration is to:
 - Expand the capacity of the disability and Sexual/and or Domestic violence organizations to provide readily available, safely appropriate and accessible services to persons with disabilities and the D/deaf persons regardless of where they seek assistance.
 - Create a sustainable infrastructure that is reflective of the needs of persons with disabilities and D/deaf persons who are survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence through the modification and implementation of policies, procedures, and practices with the collaboration partners.
 - Provide cross-education regarding accessibility to culturally competent services communication and information, deaf culture, and sexual/domestic violence.
 - Identifying gaps in services.
 - Review collaboration member organization's policies and procedures as the related to sexual and/or domestic and accessibility and address areas of needed change.

WESTCOP, INC. /VICTIMS ASSISTANCE SERVICES

- Victims Assistance Services, a component of Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc., provides free, confidential and compassionate services to innocent victims of crime, and to their families and friends, throughout Westchester County.
- With community-based offices throughout the county, VAS works with adults, teens, children and elders affected by or at risk for abuse, violence, and other serious crime. VAS has specialized services for victims of domestic and sexual violence, elder and child abuse, assault, robbery, identity theft, hate crimes, trafficking, kidnapping, and for the survivors of homicide victims. Services are accessible in Spanish and provided by culturally informed bilingual staff.
- VAS services include crisis intervention, counseling, safety planning, accompaniment, a wide range of advocacy services, trauma therapies, and information and referrals. VAS provides a 24-hour Hotline, with access to immediate support, and has trained volunteers to meet survivors at area emergency rooms. Services are free and confidential.
- VAS is committed to providing services which are victim centered, trauma informed, and culturally competent. Using a social justice framework, VAS understands that violence occurs without regard to gender, culture, social class, age, skin color, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, financial or ability status, but that the systems and resources that survivors must negotiate are often inaccessible and inhospitable to members of marginalized communities. VAS actively works to develop and advocate for fully accessible services.
- VAS also works to end violence through community action, public policy and culture change, and through prevention education programs in schools and in other community venues.
- WestCOP, through its VAS Program, is the lead agency on the SAFE ACCESS grant. Having identified the need for fully accessible services for people with disabilities who are victims of sexual and domestic violence, VAS wrote the grant application, and invited the Partners to engage in the collaborative project.

WESTCHESTER INDEPENDENT LIVING TALKING POINTS

- The Westchester Independent Living Center is a not-for-profit, community-based advocacy and resource center that serves people of all ages with all types of disabilities.
- A person is considered to have a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.
- The Westchester Independent Living Center is committed to addressing the issues of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault within the disability community by providing education and technical assistance to DV/SA providers and assist in improving accessibility.
- The Westchester Independent Living Center is committed to addressing the underlying issues of Power and Control so that all persons with disabilities can be free from abuse.

WESTCHESTER COUNTY OFFICE FOR WOMEN

- Westchester County's Office for Women was established in 1980 as an outgrowth of the need for equity in a variety of areas impacting women and families.
- The Office for Women (OFW) provides direct and referral services to women seeking assistance as the result of a domestic violence and/or sexual assault.
- The OFW oversees twenty-five contracts with 11 not-for-profit agencies in the community who also provide services to women and families in the areas of legal aid, domestic violence shelters, divorce, child custody, child care and entrepreneurial programming.
- Serve as technical advisor and consultant on all Project issues related to domestic violence including prevention, risk reduction, outreach, crisis intervention, safety planning, systems response, trauma-informed interventions and victim-centered advocacy.
- Work together with WESTCOP/VAS to design and provide cross-trainings and consultations to other Partners on enhanced confidentiality protections and other "best practices" to ensure the safety and autonomy of victim/survivors;
- Provide a full range of direct domestic violence non-residential services to persons with disabilities who may come forward for such services as a result of this Project;
- Support efforts to make systemic changes in Westchester as determined by this collaboration in furtherance of the ultimate goals of this grant.

WESTCHESTER COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE DISABLED

- The Westchester County Office for the Disabled acts as clearinghouse of information for all individuals with disabilities, their families and advocates in Westchester County.
- The OFD is the county's Americans w/ Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator and advises county departments on compliance issues pertaining to both State and Federal laws.
- The OFD manages the Origin to Destination/Curb-to-Curb, shared ride, ADA mandated Para Transit services for disabled persons within Westchester County.
- The office provides American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter referrals for all County Departments and is available to the private sector.
- OFD has a published Disability Resource guide that lists services available to persons with disabilities and members of the Deaf Community.
- OFD works to raise awareness in our community through our Handicapped Parking/Disability Awareness Presentations that are available to schools and other community venues for audiences of all ages.

WESTCHESTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

- The Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health is responsible for the oversight, management and coordination of comprehensive services to individuals with mental illness, chemical dependencies and developmental disabilities.
- DCMH provides direct services such as care coordination, police and mental health crisis intervention teams, transitional case management, mental health alternative to incarceration, and homeless outreach services.
- DCMH provides Employee Assistance Services to county employees and other contracted municipalities throughout the county.
- DCMH has a Disaster Psychological Response Team that works with the community to respond to mental health emergencies.
- DCMH publishes a Resource guide that lists all community services available to persons with mental health, substance abuse and developmental disabilities in Westchester County.
- DCMH works to raise awareness in our community through presentations, our Fall Forum and Annual Meeting events.

WESTCHESTER SAFE ACCESS MEDIA CONTACT FORM

SOURCE OF MEDIA REQUEST:

DATE:

NAME OF CONTACT:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

PURPOSE OF CONTACT:

AGENCY PROVIDING RESPONSE:

PARTNER RESPONDING TO REQUEST:

OUTCOME:

PLEASE ATTACHED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS WHEN & IF AVAILBLE