



**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
WESTCHESTER COUNTY**

**WESTCHESTER COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

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**ANTHONY A. SCARPINO, JR.**

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**TO:** Budget and Appropriations Committee  
Westchester County Board of Legislators

**FROM:** Anthony A. Scarpino, Jr., District Attorney

**DATE:** November 28, 2017

**RE:** Fiscal and Program Impact of 2018 Proposed County Budget

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The District Attorney is the chief law enforcement officer of Westchester County, and pursuant to the Constitution and laws of the State of New York, is responsible for the investigation and prosecution of criminal offenses committed in our county. As such, I proactively investigate and vigorously prosecute those responsible for committing criminal acts. Integral to my ability to accomplish this mandate, is the concomitant responsibility of Westchester County government to provide the funding and the resources necessary to allow me to meet my stated objective and mission.

Further, it is the duty of the Office and my responsibility, to insure that the resources and funding provided to this office by county government are utilized in an efficient and productive manner. To insure that we continue to meet and exceed the high fiscal standards we set for ourselves, I am continuing to prioritize innovation and technology and maximizing existing resources to initiate new programs and strategies. I am also maintaining those ongoing programs which support our prosecution and victim assistance services.

As the District Attorney's Office has done historically, I have taken great care to prepare a budget which is fiscally prudent and balances our understanding of the economic realities facing all levels of government with our obligation to the residents of Westchester County. I have not requested any additional staffing as part of my 2018 budget request. In fact, in every major category of expenditure other than net salaries and advance to grants, I have managed to reduce my 2018 budget request to an amount less than the amount appropriated in 2017, while still creating a number of new and important initiatives and without sacrificing services. I have done this by maximizing the use of existing resources and efficiently utilizing current staff. It should be noted, the District Attorney's entire budget request for 2018 makes up approximately 1.5% of the County's \$1.8B budget. It should also be noted that through prudent budget planning, we are projecting savings in our 2017 budget which will result in a substantial return of funding to the County's General Fund.

While my budget submission is replete with statistical information, statistics alone are not a measure of our accomplishments. Countless hours are spent on matters that are not readily susceptible to statistical analysis. This is clearly apparent after a review of last year's activities and achievements.

The District Attorney's Office continues to provide a substantial level of prosecution and investigative services to Westchester Villages, Towns and Cities. The Local Criminal Courts Bureau operates eight offices throughout Westchester County serving local residents, each of the County's local police departments and all of our local criminal courts. Case intake handled by this Bureau has remained steady with over 29,000 cases handled in 2016. The case load for 2017 is projected to be consistent with that figure as well. Almost all of these cases are commenced as a result of an arrest initiated by a local police department. Unless the matter is prosecuted as a felony in the Westchester County Court in White Plains, these thousands of cases are disposed of in the 41 individual local criminal courts. By having assistant district attorneys and offices in these local municipalities, crime victims and police officers are able to meet with these prosecutors in their own communities, thus saving time and travel costs.

In addition to the prosecution services provided in handling these local arrests, specialized units within the office respond to calls for investigative assistance from local police departments in matters pertaining to computer crimes, complex financial crimes, identity theft, narcotics enforcement, sex crimes, child abuse and homicides as well as a number of other matters. By providing access to forensic accountants, forensic computer analysis, the ability to secure court orders, search warrants and subpoenas, as well as specially trained prosecutors and investigators, local police departments are spared the expense of maintaining these services themselves.

Another very important component in providing services to local communities is the Westchester Intelligence Center (WIC). The WIC is an important resource in developing crime strategies and solving crimes. It is staffed by detectives, investigators and crime analysts utilizing sophisticated technology to track crime trends and provide research and investigative support to the 42 City, Town and Village police departments as well as various federal and state law enforcement agencies that operate in Westchester County. The WIC hosts regular intelligence sharing meetings among local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to review crime trends and policies in Westchester County and to ensure that critical intelligence is shared with all police agencies in the region.

In order to accomplish our goals and objectives, I have started a number of new initiatives including the following:

**Drug Court Initiative-**My office is partnering with the Chief Administrative Judge of the Ninth Judicial District to create "hub" courts for the adjudication of appropriate cases where the defendants are suffering from substance abuse disorders. Designating four City Courts as "hub courts" allows Village and Town Justices to transfer cases to a drug treatment court where defendants will receive substance abuse treatment and supportive services to promote long term recovery. This encourages disposition of criminal cases that will reduce incarceration rates and allow offenders to get the help they need without the stigma of a criminal conviction. I am a

strong advocate for drug treatment courts and other specialty courts such as veterans and mental health courts that emphasize treatment and recovery over incarceration.

**Gangs, Firearms and Narcotics-** This newly created Bureau will aggressively pursue gang related criminal activity that includes the sale of narcotics, gun running, and other criminal activity that fuels firearms related violence. To combat gun related crime, the Bureau works closely with the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) to identify and track the origins of illegal handguns, and maintains daily contact with the Westchester County Department of Public Safety's Ballistics Unit, the Westchester Intelligence Center, local police departments and the New York City Police Department to solve gun crimes that occur across municipal borders.

**Office of Immigrant Affairs-** Approximately 25% of Westchester County residents are immigrants. With such a diverse population, I have established an Office of Immigrant Affairs within the Bureau of Strategic Planning and Community Outreach. This office has embarked upon an aggressive community outreach program to assist our immigrant communities in accessing the criminal justice system. Special attention is paid to investigating and prosecuting crimes that exploit immigrants such as financial fraud, unfair wages and immigration scams. This office will enhance the relationship between our immigrant communities and law enforcement that is crucial to solving crimes and ensuring equal justice under law.

**Overdose Response Initiative (ORI)-** The Office of the District Attorney began its Overdose Response Initiative ("ORI") in March 2016 in an effort to hold sellers and their suppliers responsible for fatal and non-fatal overdoses in Westchester County. To supplement this initiative, my office launched a task force comprised of prosecutors, County and local law enforcement officers, and members of the Westchester Intelligence Center in order to track and investigate fatal and non-fatal overdoses of heroin. Evidence obtained that identifies sellers and suppliers of a lethal "brand" of heroin, fentanyl, oxycodone or other controlled substance is communicated to the Westchester Intelligence Center which maps incidents and performs analysis to determine links between overdose victims and potential sellers and suppliers. This allows investigators to target for prosecution the drug dealers who are distributing the most dangerous drugs.

**Protecting Our Older Residents-** In 2017, my office established a 24 hour hotline to report any incident of elder abuse in an effort to connect Westchester County Seniors with our Special Prosecutions Division Elder Abuse Unit where an Assistant District Attorney and Criminal Investigator with specialized training in the detection, investigation and prosecution of elder abuse handle cases from the initial report through prosecution. Further, the Office of the District Attorney remains a key member of the Elder Abuse Multidisciplinary team which meets monthly to conference cases and strategize on how to enhance case investigations and outcomes and to improve the delivery of social services to vulnerable seniors.

In addition to new initiatives, our office has continued the strong work of prior administrations including:

The Bias Crimes Unit continues to review all incidents of alleged bias with local police departments in order to determine whether an incident was criminal and whether it was motivated by bias. When a bias crime has been committed, this office vigorously prosecutes these crimes. The Bias Crimes Coordinator routinely gives presentations to schools, synagogues, police departments and veteran's groups. In 2016, 10 bias related incidents were investigated by my office.

The Identity Theft Unit investigates and prosecutes individuals and groups who steal personal identifying information of others and use this information to personally profit. Typically, stolen personal identifying information obtained through the Dark Web or by using illegal skimmers and other such devices is then encoded onto fraudulent credit cards, counterfeit checks or inserted in fraudulent loan applications.

My Office also plays a very important role in educating the public on important issues through community outreach. Cybercrime, elder abuse, bullying, drinking and driving, internet safety, and hate crimes are just a few of the many presentations the office makes throughout the County. In 2016, 80 Assistant District Attorneys made 372 presentations to schools, senior centers and community organizations. We hosted 206 Internet Safety and Cyberbullying Prevention workshops. The office also sponsored 67 training sessions for Law Enforcement Agencies and gave 52 Pro-Law presentations that reached 1,500 high school students in Westchester.