

SUNY WCC Celebrates Graduates of Westchester Educational Opportunity Center

YONKERS, NY – Joanne Dunne, Executive Director of the Youth Shelter of Westchester, was the keynote speaker today celebrating 369 student completions, including 22 HSE graduates who earned their GED, at the Westchester EOC 2026 Graduation and Completion Ceremony. The Westchester EOC, hosted by SUNY Westchester Community College, is part of a network of 10 EOCs and two Outreach Centers throughout New York State that serve local communities and help empower New Yorkers towards upward mobility. EOCs are part of the State University of New York's (SUNY) ongoing mission to support New Yorkers with access to a high-quality education that will help unleash their full potential.

"Empowering New Yorkers - and helping uplift students, and entire communities - is one of the great things SUNY does for communities throughout our state," **SUNY Chancellor John King said.** "I applaud our EOC graduates and commend them for putting in the hard work to earn this milestone accomplishment. With the education and experience they have received through their SUNY EOC program, I know that they will achieve great things for themselves, their communities, and all of New York."

The SUNY Board of Trustees said, "SUNY is committed to providing all New Yorkers with educational opportunities that will help prepare them for a better future. That is a core commitment that everyone at SUNY shares, and it is why we are so invested in ensuring programs like SUNY EOCs remain vibrant and utilized in communities throughout New York State. Congratulations to every EOC graduate, we are proud of you and look forward to your continued success."

SUNY WCC President Belinda S. Miles said, "Today we celebrate not only the accomplishments of our graduates, but also the determination, resilience, and commitment that brought them to this moment. Through the Westchester Educational Opportunity Center, these students have gained valuable skills, credentials, and confidence that will help them advance their careers, strengthen their families, and contribute to the vitality of our communities."

Westchester EOC Executive Director Ana Veras said, "Our graduates represent the very best of what is possible when determination meets opportunity. Each student's journey is unique, but all have demonstrated remarkable resilience, hard work, and commitment to building a brighter future. We are honored to celebrate their achievements and proud to support them as they take the next steps toward their educational, career, and personal goals."

Program at the Westchester EOC include:

- Allied Health
- Healthcare Administration
- Occupational Trades
- Academic Studies and Foundations

Since 1966, [SUNY's Educational Opportunity Centers](#) (EOCs) and Outreach Centers (OCs) have provided tuition-free programs and services in New York's urban centers. These programs help support students earning a high school diploma and preparing for college, as well as New Yorkers seeking to improve English language skills. Through these programs, New Yorkers are also able to learn new skills, earn certifications, and pursue necessary credentials for a variety of job opportunities.

SUNY EOCs not only provide access to educational offerings and job training, they also ensure that participating New Yorkers have access to support services while entering college and securing a job, as well as help addressing challenges like food and housing insecurity. Each EOC offers a welcoming and loving environment for students and is tuition-free for all qualified students. For more information about SUNY EOC opportunities, please visit: <https://www.ucawd.suny.edu/eoc>

SEE ATTACHED PHOTOS:

Photo 1:

Dr. Ana Veras, Executive Director of the Westchester Educational Opportunity Center, leads the academic processional into the 2026 Graduation and Completion Ceremony.

Photo 2:

An overhead view of WEOC's Class of 2026 gathered in the auditorium during the Graduation and Completion Ceremony.

Photo 3:

WEOC alumna speaker Tiara Lewis, Class of 2014 and graduate of the Medical Billing and Coding program, addresses graduates and guests during the ceremony.

Photo 4:

A graduate celebrates with a family member following the conferral of certificates and awards at the 2026 Graduation and Completion Ceremony.

Photo 5:

Graduates from WEOC's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program celebrate before the commencement processional.

Photo 6:

Lisa Jackson, Associate Provost and Director of SUNY UCAWD, addresses graduates and guests during the 2026 Graduation and Completion Ceremony.

Photo 7:

A WEOC Pathways Scholarship recipient is recognized during the ceremony for academic achievement and educational excellence.

Photo 8:

Keynote speaker Joanne Dunn, Executive Director of the Youth Shelter Program of Westchester, addresses graduates and guests during the 2026 Graduation and Completion Ceremony.

Photo Credit: Gabe Palacio Photography / Westchester Educational Opportunity Center.

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