



Westchester Residential Opportunities, Inc.

Press Release:

For Immediate Release
September 16, 2008

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WESTCHESTER RESIDENTS TO GET HELP IN MORTGAGE FORECLOSURES WITH COUNSELING AND LEGAL SERVICES UNDER NEW \$545,000 STATE GRANT

(White Plains, NY) Challenged by the rising housing crisis in Westchester County resulting from subprime mortgages and predatory lending practices, struggling homeowners will be able to get help thanks to a new \$545,000 grant from the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation. The grant has been awarded to Westchester Residential Opportunities, Inc. (WRO) and Legal Services of the Hudson Valley (LSHV), who have agreed to collaborate to provide local homeowners with a full spectrum of counseling and legal services to help them avoid foreclosure and homelessness.

WRO, as one of the premier housing counseling agencies in the lower Hudson Valley region, has achieved tremendous success so far with its mortgage foreclosure prevention and anti-predatory lending efforts, and has a strong track record of responding professionally and quickly to the current subprime mortgage crisis in our region. LSHV, the sole provider of free, comprehensive, civil legal services to poor and low-income people in the region, has represented hundreds of clients throughout the region in home ownership matters, stepping in to save homes from foreclosure.

The new \$545,000, two-year, grant will allow both WRO and LSHV to add organizational capacity to address the increasing demand for housing counseling and legal services. WRO Executive Director Geoffrey Anderson said, "This new funding will have enormous impact on Westchester homeowners who are facing the loss of their homes. Each of WRO's successes requires substantial effort, involving financial counseling and negotiations with lenders and realtors. Since this grant will allow us to hire additional counselors, we can help many more struggling homeowners. We are also thrilled to be partnering with LSHV, who will provide legal representation and court-based services when our clients require legal assistance."

LSHV Executive Director Barbara Finkelstein, Esq., said, “We are grateful to New York State for responding to the urgent situation facing homeowners in Westchester County. This grant will enable WRO and LSHV to serve a greater number of Westchester residents, and our collaboration will provide our clients with a full range of housing counseling and legal services when they are threatened with the loss of their homes.”

Westchester Residential Opportunities, Inc. (WRO), a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote equal, affordable and accessible housing opportunities for all residents of our region, was founded in 1968. WRO champions the expansion of non-discriminatory housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income people in Westchester County, minorities, senior citizens, and the psychiatrically disabled. WRO is a HUD-certified Housing Counseling agency, a licensed real estate broker, and a United Way agency. All of WRO’s housing services for consumers are free, and are funded by government grants, private contributions, and corporate support. WRO has offices in White Plains and Mt. Vernon, New York.

Legal Services of the Hudson Valley (LSHV), founded in 1967, is a non-profit law firm that is committed to providing free support, advocacy and high-quality civil legal services to poor and low-income individuals and families. LSHV helps struggling individuals resolve urgent, civil legal problems, and, in the process, help build strong communities where the rights of our neighbors are protected, regardless of their incomes. LSHV works in the areas of housing, children’s advocacy, domestic violence, health advocacy, public benefits, elder law, disabilities, HIV/AIDS, and consumer law. LSHV serves Westchester County through its offices in White Plains, Yonkers, and Mt. Vernon, and has three upstate offices serving Dutchess, Orange, Sullivan, Ulster, and Putnam Counties.