

“Our hope is that every participant in GRIP Court can realize the words of Malala Yousafzai—

‘I want every girl (and boy) to know that their voice can change the world.’

It is the philosophy of GRIP Court that this can be done through positive interventions and partnerships.”

- Justice Kathie E. Davidson

GENDER
RESPONSIVE
INITIATIVES &
PARTNERSHIPS

GRIP Mission Statement

“Promote healing and provide opportunities, justice and supports that improve outcomes for Participants—in particular, for girls of color—who are at risk or involved in the juvenile justice system. The GRIP Court also seeks to promote healing, justice and supportive interventions that improve outcomes for individuals who face challenges because of their gender identity, gender expression and/or sexual orientation.”



White Plains Family Court

GRIP Court — Court Rm. 305

111 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard

White Plains, NY 10601

Hon. Kathie E. Davidson, Presiding



**WESTCHESTER
COUNTY**

GENDER
RESPONSIVE
INITIATIVES &
PARTNERSHIPS

SPECIALIZED COURT PART

GRIP VISION STATEMENT

“The Westchester Girls’ Justice Initiative, now known as the Westchester County Gender Responsive Initiatives and Partnerships (**GRIP**) will provide opportunities and improve outcomes for Participants at risk or involved in the juvenile justice system, in particular, for girls of color who are overrepresented at every contact in the system. By bringing together leaders of the juvenile justice system and the community, the GRIP Court will develop a responsive environment that is built on culturally competent gender- and trauma-informed policies and practices for Participants at risk or involved in the justice system. This will include assessments, resources and services to prevent Participants from being arrested, formally referred to court, and/or placed in detention or placement, and to serve Participants who enter the system. The GRIP Court will be informed by research, data analysis, and the decision-makers at each point of contact within the justice system, in partnership with the community, the Participants, and their families.”

GRIP HISTORY

In 2016, Westchester County was awarded a federal grant from the New York State Girls’ Justice Initiative (GJI), which was a collaboration led by the New York State Unified Court System and implemented by the New York State Permanent Judicial



Commission on Justice for Children. This partnership also included the New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development and the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services.

The purpose of this grant was to address the documented criminalization of girls’ behaviors, including those related to status offenses and technical violations of probation that too often reflect trauma-induced responses, and the need to implement gender-specific, trauma-informed policies and programs for girls at risk or involved with the juvenile justice system. Under the leadership of the Administrative Judge of the Ninth Judicial District, the *Honorable Kathie E. Davidson*, a team of partners was convened that included key stakeholders at each point of contact within the justice system. After over two years of training, strategy meetings, participating in various certificate programs and other collaborations with the GJI, the GRIP Court launched on October 17, 2018.



‘Gender-responsive approaches go beyond sensitivity to the differences between women and men.’

MATTERS ELIGIBLE FOR GRIP

Consideration for admission to the GRIP Court is limited to non-designated felony Juvenile Delinquency matters where the Participant is a Westchester County resident. Participants must reside within the community in order to receive optimal services. Matters are typically flagged by the Presentment Agency and filed in the GRIP Court. However, other partners can refer matters to the GRIP Court. Those matters that are eligible for GRIP are all cases involving youth, especially girls of color, as well as youth who face challenges because of their gender identity, gender expression, and/or sexual orientation.

CREATIVE JUSTICE

SALIENT FEATURES

The GRIP Court meets weekly and Judge Davidson presides over all matters. The County Attorneys, Attorneys for the Child (Participant), as well as designated Court Officers and other court staff personnel have been specifically trained to work with GRIP Participants. A major component of GRIP is the roundtable conferencing model. It follows a collaborative team-based approach that is non-adversarial and not focused on the alleged act. All parties meet weekly, in cooperation with other agencies, to create the best outcomes for each Participant. Each matter must meet the eligibility criteria and each matter is discussed at monthly assessment and review meetings with all stakeholders.

SERVICES OFFERED

All services offered are made by Court referral, in collaboration with the Resource Coordinator and the Sorority Leaders Mentorship Program. Services are offered through the following providers (*not an all-inclusive list*):

Dept. of Probation
Dept. of Social Services - Cross Systems Unit
Court Appointed Social Workers
Educational Services - National Honor Society
Westchester and Rockland Mediation Centers
of CLUSTER
Peer Advocates
Mentorship Program- Sorority Leaders
Safe Harbor