

Press Release for Immediate Release

Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc. (WestCOP) is an organization serving the Hudson Valley region for over 53 years, providing an array of services including Head Start, Supporting Services for Veterans and Their Families, OASIS Homeless Shelter, Weatherization and Community Action Programs.

The Board of Directors is a tripartite Board selected from the communities within the area served. These are individuals whose vested interests in the agency are to ensure that the population WestCOP serves receives excellent services. Recently, the CFO was terminated by the former CEO after a prolonged investigation. On or about June 6, 2017, Tarek Abdelaziz and two former employees filed a complaint with the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors immediately hired an independent law firm, which specializes in employment law and employee investigations, to conduct an extensive review of the allegations. After conducting interviews and reviewing a multitude of documents, the firm subsequently determined that these employees misused the Board's complaint procedure and intentionally filed a false complaint. Based upon their findings, the firm recommended that these employees be terminated.

Upon the conclusion of the investigation, Mr. Abdelaziz began issuing a series of defamatory threats and statements towards the agency by threatening the administration and Board of Directors that he would retaliate to bring "down the organization". Mr. Abdelaziz has subsequently launched a personal campaign to undermine and destroy the integrity of the agency which serves our community. For years prior to Mr. Abdelaziz issuing his allegations, CFO Abdelaziz's official reports to the Board of Directors were positive, indicating that the agency was operating efficiently without any major financial concerns. As of March 21, 2016, Mr. Abdelaziz reported to the Board of Directors, "WestCOP received an "Unmodified Opinion" and were considered a "Low-Risk Auditee" as has been the case in the last three years. This is the BEST possible outcome as it reflects "NO FINDINGS" to be reported on our Financial Statements or anything reported to the funding sources. The major programs audited including Head Start, CACFP and Victims Assistance Services went very smoothly, and the auditors were very happy with the results of their audit. There was basically nothing negative to report. The auditors felt we did a great job in managing our cash. That is no easy task, but we did it." As the CFO for all of WestCOP, the Board of Directors trusted and relied on Mr. Abdelaziz's positive reports.

Additionally, Mr. Abdelaziz in his June 30, 2017 financial report stated, "the negative variances are not automatic cause for alarm as we are either paying expenses... or it is simply a timing issue where we are waiting for the money to arrive from the funding sources. I am very happy with the financials as they provide a lot of details for each programs". As the CFO, Mr. Abdelaziz had full autonomy and latitude to manage all aspects of cost allocation and payment of bills.

The employees and leadership of WestCOP are troubled by the allegations of the former CFO who helped lead WestCOP for over 5 years. These allegations are hurtful, distasteful and are a concern to all stakeholders, within the organization and without.

WestCOP will continue to provide much needed services to our community, even in the face of the inflammatory and irresponsible statements by a disgruntled former employee. WestCOP continues to stand with our clients, vendors, partners, funders and collaborators as we remain steadfast in our mission of public service, while being proactive in providing every Federal, State and Private funder all our records and successes. WestCOP understands that while these specious allegations will not dissipate quickly, we firmly believe that WestCOP's reputation and integrity will be vindicated in the Court.