

Speaker Bios

New York State Redistricting – the Good the Bad and the Ugly - A Webinar Hosted by the New York State Census Equity Fund



Melody Lopez is Co-Executive Director of the New York Civic Engagement Table (NYCET). NYCET is committed to supporting the organizing efforts of over 70 partner organizations across New York State to collectively work to build an inclusive democracy. Melody has over fifteen years of experience in community organizing, campaigns, coalition building, and government. Melody joined NYCET in 2015 after working with the NYC Department of Education Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and before that she managed several successful campaigns. Melody began her organizing career at the Working Families

Party where she worked on issue and electoral campaigns in communities across New York. She was also fortunate to spend time living in the California bay area where she organized communities and coordinated a coalition to build support for affordable housing while at the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California. Melody holds a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from New York University.



Steven Romalewski directs the Mapping Service at the Center for Urban Research at the CUNY Graduate Center; the mapping service engages with foundations, agencies, businesses, nonprofits, and CUNY researchers to use spatial analysis techniques in applied research projects, specializing in online applications providing intuitive access to powerful data sets, displayed visually through interactive maps and other formats.

After providing invaluable support to census stakeholders by mapping and analyzing 2020 Census response rates and hard-to-count communities, Romalewski and his team examined and visualized congressional and state legislative district maps nationwide to help people understand the implications of redistricting (www.redistrictingandyou.org) and created more detailed “Redistricting & You” interactive maps in 10 priority states – beginning with New York – that made it easy to compare then-current (pre-2023) districts with proposed maps submitted by redistricting officials and stakeholders. The comparison maps also displayed detailed demographic and voting data and redistricting metrics for each district (for example, see <https://newyork.redistrictingandyou.org>). These sites remain online so voters can see what their new district looks like, and voter engagement stakeholders can use them for outreach and education.



The CGR Board selected **Erika Rosenberg** as the organization's President and Chief Executive Officer in June 2019. Ms. Rosenberg joined CGR in 2005 after a career in journalism covering state and local government, and education policy and urban schools. She leads CGR's expanding portfolio of work with nonprofits and foundations in community indicators, evaluation, asset mapping and landscape scans, and collective impact. Ms. Rosenberg is a trained facilitator, having completed training with the Greater Rochester Parent Leadership Institute, with three years of experience facilitating diverse groups of parents in an adult education setting touching on critical subjects such as racial equity. Ms. Rosenberg has directed a wide variety of projects, including CGR's Community Indicators projects, program/policy evaluations, and environmental scans. Her passion is helping communities, institutions and groups make meaningful use of data, analysis and research to inform strategic priorities and collaborative solutions. In her time at CGR, she has successfully completed projects for dozens of clients ranging from nonprofit agencies such as Ibero-American Action League and the YWCA in Rochester to funders such as the United Way of Greater Rochester and the Walmart Foundation to governments and agencies including Rochester City Council and the City's Department of Recreation and Youth Services.

Ms. Rosenberg has led data analysis and interpretation across a variety of topic areas and is well-versed in working with different types of datasets and using a variety of analytical techniques. A seasoned facilitator and presenter, she has led conversations about data, community trends and strategies to achieve change across the country, ranging from the State of Delaware to Little Rock, AR to Erie, PA.



Patricia Swann is a Program Director at The New York Community Trust where she has been responsible for over \$150 million in grants for affordable housing, community development, civic engagement, and nonprofit capacity building projects. She has served on several nonprofit and philanthropic boards and committees over the years, including: *Brooklyn Workforce Innovations*, *Change Capital Fund*, *GoVote NYC*, *LISC-New York City Advisory Committee*, *Neighborhoods First Fund*, and the *New York State Census Equity Fund*. She is also a member of the advisory committee of *Fair Representation in Redistricting*, a coalition of national and local foundations concerned about the damage to our democracy resulting from gerrymandered voting districts.

Pat is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and received a Master of Science in City and Regional Planning from Pratt Institute's Graduate School of Architecture. She is also a recipient of a Charles H. Revson Foundation Fellowship at Columbia University.



Erika Wood is a Senior Program Officer at the Ford Foundation. Her grant making seeks to expand democratic participation in the United States, promote greater representation in elections, and shape agendas to reflect the public interest, with a focus on promoting voting rights and other aspects of inclusive nonpartisan democratic practice.

Before joining the foundation, Erika was a professor of law at New York Law School where she directed the Voting Rights and Civic Participation Project. Prior to that, she was deputy director of the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice and taught the Public Policy Advocacy Clinic at the New York University School of Law. Erika has designed and launched major reform campaigns around the country, litigated complex civil rights cases, and provided legal counsel and strategic guidance to advocates, legislators, and policy makers

nationwide. She has authored numerous articles and reports and is a frequent speaker and commentator on voting rights, criminal justice reform, and racial justice issues.



Jeff Wice is an Adjunct Professor and Senior Fellow at New York Law School where he directs the New York Census & Redistricting Institute and teaches classes on redistricting, election law, and the census. He is now working on his sixth redistricting cycle. In past years, he served as redistricting counsel to 5 State Assembly Speakers and 4 State Senate Democratic leaders. He also served as counsel to three recent New York City Districting Commissions and to numerous counties and localities across New York, including Nassau, Suffolk, Albany, Chemung, & Monroe counties and the cities of Syracuse and Albany. During the 2000 census cycle, Wice served as counsel to President Bill Clinton's members of the U.S. Census Monitoring Board. He is the co-editor/author of the National Conference of State Legislatures' (NCSL) 2020 Redistricting Law Handbook and contributed to the 1990, 2000, and 2010 editions. Professor Wice has also served in several NCSL leadership positions, including on the national Executive Committee and currently as Staff Chair of the Elections and Redistricting Committee. He is a Fellow at the State University of New York at Buffalo Law School and has taught election law at Hofstra Law School and the Touro Law Center.