



Media Kit

We are happy to connect journalists with our program officers, who are experts on a range of topics—from workforce development to immigrant integration to the environment. We’ve listed their fields of expertise below. Also, for reporters interested in philanthropy, our executive director can talk about trends in giving. Plus we can connect you to thoughtful Westchester nonprofits and the people they serve.

PRESS INQUIRIES

Laura Rossi – Office: (914) 671-6956; Cell: (914) 671-6956 lrossi@wcf-ny.org

NEWS RELEASES AND PUBLICATIONS

- NEWS RELEASES: E-mail Laura Rossi above to receive releases via email announcing recent grants and other topics. You can also read them in our **Newsroom**.
- GRANTS NEWS: **Sign up** to receive our annual newsletter, providing profiles of our work.
- PROFESSIONAL TAX AND ESTATE PLANNING NOTES: [Sign up](#) to receive this newsletter for attorneys and wealth advisors, published three times a year. It covers topics ranging from timing of charitable contributions to IRS efforts to improve nonprofit governance.

ABOUT THE WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The Westchester Community Foundation is the community foundation for Westchester County. It is a division of The New York Community Trust, the community foundation for New York City, Westchester, and Long Island. Thanks to the generosity of individuals, families, and businesses—and the guidance of their professional advisors—we are one of the largest funders of local nonprofits in the eight counties of downstate New York State.

We support programs and projects to improve the lives of all Westchester residents, with an emphasis on promoting healthy lives, promising futures, and thriving communities. Our competitive grants are made possible by funds set up by donor bequests and wills and are announced five times a year. See most recent announcement **here**. The Foundation has many living donors who suggest grants from donor-advised funds. Also, the Foundation houses the Westchester Workforce Funders Collaborative, and participates in several funder collaboratives including the Long Island

Sound Funders Collaborative and the Census Equity Fund. They combine the thinking and resources of several foundations and make grants throughout the year.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

You can find updated financial statements of The New York Community Trust in the [About section of our website](#).

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

- In 1924, The New York Community Trust was formed by 11 banks to more effectively make grants from charitable trusts they held. Though it was one of the first community **foundations**, today, it is one of more than 700 throughout the country.
- In 1931, The Trust created the first donor-advised fund. William Barstow wanted to actively give back during his lifetime but didn't want to create a private foundation; he also wanted to leave a permanent legacy. The Trust created the first donor-advised fund for him.
- To make sure nonprofit organizations serving our contiguous suburbs flourish, The New York Community Trust created the Westchester Community Foundation in 1975 and the Long Island Community Foundation in 1978.

OUR EXPERTISE

ISSUES (See staff bios at bottom)

ARTS & CULTURE | Robin Melén

CENSUS | Robin Melén

CHARITABLE NEW YORKERS | Laura Rossi

CIVIC AFFAIRS | Tara Seeley

CLIMATE CHANGE & SUSTAINABILITY | Tara Seeley

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT | Tara Seeley

DONOR-ADVISED FUNDS | Laura Rossi

JUVENILE JUSTICE | Robin Melén

ENVIRONMENT | Tara Seeley

GRANTMAKING | Laura Rossi

HEALTH - BEHAVIORIAL/MENTAL HEALTH | Robin Melén

HUMAN SERVICES | Tara Seeley

IMMIGRATION | Tara Seeley

LEGAL ISSUES (Estate Planning, Wills, Charitable Giving) | Carrie Trowbridge, General Counsel, New York Community Trust

LEGAL SERVICES | Tara Seeley

NONPROFIT CAPACITY NEEDS | Robin Melén

PHILANTHROPY (General) | Laura Rossi

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT | Tara Seeley

YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS | Robin Melén

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT | Robin Melén

BIOGRAPHIES

Laura Rossi, Esq. – Executive Director

Laura leads the Foundation's efforts to address community needs by bringing together donors, funders, nonprofit leaders, and other partners to better understand the root causes of persistent challenges and emerging needs and develop a shared approach to improving the quality of life in Westchester.

She began her career at the Foundation in 2007 as a program officer. She holds a J.D. from New York Law School and a B.A. from St. John's College in Santa Fe, NM. She is a graduate of Leadership Westchester. Prior to her career in philanthropy, she practiced law and worked for local and statewide nonprofits and taught at local colleges.

Laura is co-chair of the board of directors of [Sustainable Westchester](#), and a board member of [New York Funders Alliance](#). In 2019 she was appointed to the Westchester Housing Opportunity Commission by County Executive George Latimer.

Tara Seeley – Senior Program Officer

Tara manages the Foundation's grantmaking programs in the areas of workforce development and job placement, community development, access to legal services, basic human needs and self-sufficiency,

social justice, and conservation and environment. Prior to joining the Foundation, she was a program officer at the Central Indiana Community Foundation. She has held professional and volunteer leadership positions in Montgomery County, MD and Indianapolis, IN in community development, with a focus on affordable housing and economic and workforce development. She holds a J.D./M.Div. degree from Vanderbilt University and a B.A. from Sewanee: The University of the South.

Robin Melén – Program Officer

Robin manages the Foundation's grantmaking programs in the areas of youth development, arts and culture, health, and technical assistance and capacity building for Westchester nonprofits. She is a member of the Westchester County Youth Board and the Board of Directors of the Sing Sing Prison Museum. She holds a B.A. from Syracuse University, and an M.A. in writing from Manhattanville College. Professional certifications include a certificate in nonprofit management from Manhattanville College. She is a graduate of Leadership Westchester.

Carrie Trowbridge – General Counsel at The New York Community Trust

Carrie advises charitable New Yorkers and their professional advisors on creating funds in The Trust and on other charitable matters. She is also responsible for a broad range of legal issues for The Trust. Prior to joining The Trust, Carrie served as associate general counsel and director of nonprofit practice at New York University. Previously, she was an associate in the tax-exempt organizations practice group at Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler, which she joined after serving as a law clerk to the Honorable Charles S. Haight, Jr. in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. Carrie received a B.A. from Yale University, a doctorate in English Literature from Oxford University, and a J.D. from Yale Law School.