

The New York Community Trust

MEDIA KIT

The Trust offers journalists access to a knowledgeable team of experts on topics such as affordable housing, criminal justice, education, urban environment, health, immigration, older adults, and workforce development. For reporters interested in philanthropy, our community foundation has specialists who can talk about trends in giving or grantmaking. We can also connect you to nonprofits in New York City, Westchester County, and Long Island that are working on the ground to address our region's most pressing issues.

MEDIA CONTACTS

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NEWS RELEASES AND PUBLICATIONS

- **NEWS RELEASES:** Contact Courtney Biggs to get email announcements and news releases from The Trust. You can also access our full archive of releases in our [newsroom](#).
- **GRANTS NEWS:** [Sign up](#) to receive our newsletters, published several times a year, providing insights from staff and donors, along with reports about how our funding makes a difference.

ABOUT THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST

The Trust is 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.

We support programs and projects to improve the lives of all New Yorkers, 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 announcements here](#). The Trust has many living donors who suggest grants from donor-advised funds. Also, several funder collaboratives are housed at The Trust, they combine the thinking and resources of several foundations and make grants throughout the year.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

You can find updated financial statements in the [About section](#) of our website.

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

- In 1924, The New York Community Trust was formed by 11 banks to make grants more effectively 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.
- The Trust played a vital role in the region's response to the AIDS crisis, September 11th, and COVID-19. Its grantmaking has expanded local support for immigrants, funded critical medical research, increased employment opportunities for young people, cleaned up polluted waterways, and more.
- In 2024, for its centennial anniversary, The Trust announced the integration of its existing regional branches, the Long Island Community Foundation and Westchester Community Foundation under The Trust's organizational umbrella. All offices now operate under one brand name, furthering a commitment to communities across the state and strengthening its legacy of high-impact grantmaking for years to come.

OUR EXPERTS

ARTS EDUCATION | Leigh Ross

ARTS & CULTURE | Craig Peterson

CENSUS | Eve Stotland

CHARITABLE NEW YORKERS | Amy Freitag, Rebecca Mandelman, John Oddy, Dave Okorn, and Laura Rossi

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT | Chantella Mitchell
DISABILITIES | Rachel Pardoe
DONOR-ADVISED FUNDS | John Oddy and Carrie Trowbridge
EDUCATION | Kadisha Gordon
ENVIRONMENT | Arturo Garcia-Costas
ESTATE PLANNING | Audra Lewton
GRANTMAKING | Shawn Morehead
HEALTH – MEDICAL | Irfan Hasan
HEALTH - BEHAVIORIAL/MENTAL HEALTH | Irfan Hasan
HOUSING | Chantella Mitchell
HUMAN JUSTICE | Eve Stotland
HUMAN SERVICES | Chantella Mitchell
IMMIGRATION | Eve Stotland
GENDER EQUITY | Leigh Ross
LEGAL ISSUES (Estate Planning, Wills, Charitable Giving) | Carrie Trowbridge
LEGAL SERVICES | Eve Stotland
LONG ISLAND | David Okorn
OLDER ADULTS | Rachel Pardoe
PHILANTHROPY (General) | Amy Freitag
PHILANTHROPIC ADVISING/ANALYSIS/TRENDS | Julia Chang
SOLID WASTE | Arturo Garcia-Costas
VOTING | Eve Stotland
WESTCHESTER COUNTY | Laura Rossi
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT | Roderick Jenkins
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT | Roderick Jenkins

BIOGRAPHIES

Amy Freitag – President

Amy Freitag became president of The New York Community Trust in July 2022. For the prior eight years, she was executive director of the J.M. Kaplan Fund, a 75-year-old family foundation based in New York City. During her tenure, she initiated the J.M.K. Innovation Prize and led grantmaking in criminal justice reform, climate change, democracy, and historical conservation, including several Civil Rights sites.

Freitag previously was executive director of the New York Restoration Project, which led a private effort to plant one million new trees in New York City. Prior to that, she was the U.S. program director for the World Monuments Fund and deputy commissioner for capital projects with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. She served on the NYC Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments, and Markers and currently sits on the boards of Philanthropy New York and the James Marston Fitch Charitable Foundation.

Freitag was raised in Akron, Ohio, and holds an A.B. from Smith College and master's degrees from the University of Pennsylvania.

Arturo Garcia-Costas – Program Director, Regional, National and International Environment

Arturo manages The Trust's national and New York City environmental grantmaking program as well as our Appalachia grantmaking. He serves on the board of Friends of the Earth-US. He has a B.A. in International Affairs and Theater from the City University of New York, a J.D. from Stanford Law School, where he focused on international and environmental law, and an M.S. in Urban Policy and Leadership from Hunter College.

Kadisha Gordon – Program Director, Education and Scholarships

Kadisha manages grantmaking in New York City public education in addition to The Trust's scholarships, awards, and fellowships. She also oversees projects and grants to ensure that the city's public schools provide all students with the opportunity to reach their full potential, and to graduate- prepared for college and work. Kadisha is passionate about equity, education, and social justice and is excited about the opportunity to strategically align the Trust's philanthropic goals with New York City's needs.

With over 10 years of experience in education and the nonprofit sector, Kadisha holds her B.A. in public justice and journalism from SUNY Oswego and her M.A. in school and guidance counseling from NYU. In her most recent role, she served as the director of college and academic services at University Settlement Society of New York.

Irfan Hasan – Vice President, Programs and Grants

Irfan directs the Healthy Lives grantmaking program at The Trust, and oversees health, behavioral health, and biomedical research grants. Irfan also oversees \$12 million of grants to organizations nationally designated as grantees through donor bequests. He serves on the boards of Philanthropy New York and Grantmakers In Health. Irfan is a member of Philanthropy New York's Health Working Group, co-chair of the American Public Health Association's Public Health Funder Network, an elected fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine, a member of the North American chapter of the Global Leadership Exchange, and a member of the governance committee of the Substance Use Funders Collaborative. Irfan has a B.Sc. from Northeastern University and a Master's in Public Administration from New York University's Wagner Graduate School of Public Service.

Roderick Jenkins – Senior Program Director, Youth and Workforce Development, Homelessness & Social Services

Roderick manages The Trust's grantmaking for youth and workforce development. He leads our work to reform criminal justice and to increase youth employment and help disconnected youth. Roderick is chair of the New York City Youth Funders Network and a board member of Advocates for Children. He earned his undergraduate degree from LIU Global College (formerly Friends World College) and a master's in social work from Hunter College.

Audra Lewton – Director of Planned Giving

Audra Lewton helps donors create meaningful charitable legacies through thoughtful and creative planning. Audra began her career as an associate in the private client group at Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP. She then spent over a decade at Barnard College, where she served as director of gift and estate planning and assistant general counsel.

Prior to joining The Trust, Audra worked in private practice, where she focused on estate and charitable planning for individuals and families and advising and supporting nonprofit organizations. Audra is a lifelong New Yorker. She earned a B.A. magna cum laude from Wellesley College and a J.D. cum laude from Cornell Law School.

Before law school, Audra spent time studying and teaching in France. She is an active volunteer in her local community, a devoted team leader for the Lustgarten Foundation's annual Long Island Walk for Pancreatic Cancer Research, and a member of the board of directors for the Philanthropic Planning Group of Greater New York.

Chantella Mitchell – Program Director, Community Development, Housing, and Human Services

Chantella is The New York Community Trust's Program Officer for Community Development, Housing and Human Services. Prior to joining The Trust, she served as an executive director in the Office of Development at the NYC Department of Housing Preservation. Chantella has a long track record in public service positions, including stints as a director of operations at HPD and a senior budget analyst for the Housing and Economic Development Taskforce at the NYC Mayor's Office of Management and Budget. She has a M.S. in social work from Columbia University and B.A. from Vanderbilt University and is a former Trust Fellow.

Shawn Morehead – Executive Vice President & Chief Program Officer

Shawn oversees The Trust's competitive grantmaking program, which distributes approximately \$50 million annually. Prior to this position, she served as The Trust's program director for human justice and education grantmaking. She received a B.A. from Columbia University and a J.D. from Stanford Law School.

John Oddy – Vice President, Donor Experience

John works directly with donors to help them deepen the impact of their philanthropy and

identify the most effective strategies for their giving. He is a frequent speaker on donor trends, the philanthropic landscape, and has a special interest in the arts and humanities. John is a graduate of Bard College and has a M.A. in Urban Planning from New York University's Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service.

David M. Okorn – Vice President, Long Island

David has been executive director for Long Island since 2010. He began his career at The Trust in 2008 as director of advancement and donor relations. Previously, he was senior vice president of development and external relations at Abilities, a nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of adults and children with disabilities. David has also held positions as director of community relations at KeySpan and executive director of the KeySpan Foundation. He serves on the Long Island State Park, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commission.

Rachel Pardoe – Program Director, Accessibility, Older Adults, and Technical Assistance

Rachel oversees The Trust's grantmaking for older adults, people with disabilities, including the blind and those with visual impairments, and animal welfare. She has a B.A. in psychology from New York University and a master's in public administration from New York University's Wagner School of Public Service.

Craig Peterson – Program Director, Arts, Culture and Historic Preservation

Craig Peterson manages The Trust's grantmaking for arts, culture, and historic preservation. He has lived in NYC for more than 30 years and has always worked in the creative sector. Craig enjoys contributing to the cultural landscape of the city through innovative arts initiatives and programs. Prior to joining The Trust, Craig was president of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, vice president for visual and performing arts at Henry Street Settlement, and executive artistic director of the Abrons Arts Center. Craig lives with his husband in Ditmas Park, Brooklyn. Together they raised five children. He holds a BA from Bard College.

Leigh Ross – Program Director, Gender Equity, Early Childhood, and Arts Education

Leigh Ross oversees The Trust's grantmaking for arts education, early childhood education, and girls and young women.

Previously, she managed two funder collaboratives housed at The Trust, the Hive Digital Media Learning Fund, which focused on education technology, and the Fund for New Citizens, which supported organizing and advocacy for immigrants' rights. She has also worked in various capacities for local cultural organizations, including as a curator, educator, and researcher. Leigh serves on the Arts Education Advisory Committee to the City Department of Education's Panel on Educational Policy and the New York Community Foundation Policy Working Group.

She lives with her family in Washington Heights, Manhattan, and is a hobbyist photographer. She has a BFA from the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University and an MA from Columbia University's Teachers College.

Laura Rossi – Vice President, Westchester

Laura leads The Trust's efforts in Westchester County by bringing together donors, funders, nonprofit leaders, and other partners to understand the root causes of persistent challenges and emerging needs and developing a shared approach to improving the quality of life in Westchester. She began her career at The Trust 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 New Mexico.

Eve Stotland – Program Director, Human Justice and Civic Affairs

Eve Stotland is responsible for grantmaking in human justice and civic affairs. She is co-chair of GoVoteNYC, a funder collaborative supporting nonpartisan efforts to strengthen democracy, and Youth and Families Forward, a collaborative to transform child welfare so NYC's young people and families thrive, free from unnecessary government supervision.

Eve spent over a decade at The Door, representing low-income young people in matters such as immigration, family law, and public benefits. In 2014, she helped launch a citywide coalition that provides free representation to more than a thousand children in immigration court. She also served as director of the Mental Health Project at the Urban Justice Center and as associate director of the Public Interest Law Center at NYU's School of Law. She serves on the New York State Office of Court Administration's Advisory Council on Immigration Issues in Family Court. Eve is a graduate of Brown University and Yale Law School.

Barbara Taveras – Program Director, Special Projects

Barbara Taveras co-designs and coordinates cross-program and regional grantmaking initiatives. She also helps other Trust departments and divisions with meeting planning and facilitation.

Barbara was previously president of the Edward W. Hazen Foundation and is passionate about ensuring that young people of color from low-income backgrounds thrive academically and professionally and are active members of their communities and society. Barbara dreams in Spanish, loves rice & beans, and enjoys reading fiction by Latin American writers and U.S. Latino writers.

She lives in the South Bronx, where her immigrant family settled when they arrived in the U.S. in 1970. She has an M.A. in Latin American studies from Georgetown University and a B.A. in political science from Pace University.

Carrie Trowbridge – Executive Vice President & General Counsel & Corporate Secretary

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.

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