



Claiming Our Seat at the Table: Women Organizers & Voting Rights

AGENDA

April 3, 2024

Moderator:

Kai Durant, Community Relations Specialist, Division on Civil Rights

Opening Remarks:

Tee Leonardo-Santiago, Director of Outreach & Community Relations, Division on Civil Rights

Panelists:

Rosemary DiSavino, Deputy Director, Division on Civil Rights

Melissa Marks, Senior Organizer, League of Women Voters of New Jersey.

Olivia Errico, Public Programs Manager, Alice Paul Institute

Questions and Answers

Closing Remarks

Kai Durant, Community Relations Specialist, Division on Civil Rights

Moderator & Panelists Bios

Tee Leonardo-Santiago (Opening Remarks)

Interim Director of Outreach & Community Relations



Tisha “Tee” Leonardo-Santiago (she/they) holds the proud distinction of being the first Latinx Director of Outreach and Community Relations at the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights (DCR), where they provide strategic oversight and implementation of the Community Relations Unit’s statewide outreach and programming to support and uplift the Division’s initiatives, social media presence, and crisis response efforts to prevent and eliminate discrimination and bias in the Garden State. Tee’s team is also a crisis response unit following major civil rights incidents. As a community mediator, they engage in complex mediation, restorative justice practices, and community dialogue with a trauma-informed care lens. In recognition of the Unit’s exceptional outreach and Tee’s leadership, in 2023, Attorney General Platkin presented the Community

Relations Unit the “Excellence in Community Outreach” Award and Tee the “Excellence for Exceptional Service Award.”

Before joining the Community Relations Unit, Tee began her career at the Division as a Bilingual Investigator in the Enforcement Unit, investigating employment and place of public accommodation cases while assisting with Division outreach. They served as the bilingual subject matter expert in developing and implementing the online complaint portal, the New Jersey Bias Investigation Access System (NJBIAS), launched in November 2020. Before joining DCR, Tee was the first Bilingual General Adjuster for one of the oldest insurance adjustment firms in the country, where they investigated commercial fire & theft, personal lines, fine arts & fidelity claims. Tee is a second-generation Latinx from Hudson County and a first-generation college graduate receiving their undergraduate and graduate degrees in Criminal Justice from New Jersey City University.

Kai Durant (Moderator)

Community Relations Specialist, Division on Civil Rights



Kai Durant (she/her) is a community relations specialist in the Community Relations Unit (CRU) at the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights. At CRU, she works to prevent acts of discrimination and bias based harassment through education and community engagement. She co-leads topics of housing, employment, disability, and the youth ambassador program.

She completed her undergrad at Rutgers University with a focus Sociology and Gender Studies. Following undergrad, she completed her master's in social work with a concentration on policy at Columbia University. She has experience in community outreach, advocacy, and organizing from her past work at a non-profit, community health center, and campaign.

Rosemary DiSavino (Panelist)

Deputy Director, Division on Civil Rights



Rosemary DiSavino has served as the Deputy Director of the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights (DCR) since 2019. Before joining DCR, Ms. DiSavino was a senior trial attorney with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, where she litigated both systemic and individual claims of discrimination. Prior to her career in public service, Ms. DiSavino had her own law practice and was a partner in a boutique firm concentrating on employee rights. Ms. DiSavino received her B.A. from Upsala College and J.D. from Brooklyn Law School, where she was the recipient of the Edward V. Sparer Public Interest Law Fellowship

Melissa Marks (Panelist)

Senior Organizer, League of Women Voters of New Jersey



Melissa Marks (she/her) grew up in New York and graduated from Lehigh University where she studied the environment, political science, and business. After graduating she worked in environmental advocacy with Clean Water Action New Jersey where she was able to develop future activists and fight for environmental protections as Canvass Director. In her role with the League, Melissa focuses on supporting her members and the public in building strong voter outreach campaigns and advocating for priority legislation to make NJ a more equitable state.

Olivia Errico (Panelist)

Public Programs Manager, Alice Paul Institute



Olivia Errico (she/her) holds a bachelor's degree from Bennington College in Liberal Arts and a master's degree in public history from Rutgers University-Camden. As a graduate student, Olivia researched 20th century women's political movements with a particular focus in grassroots activism and feminist movements. Prior to coming to API, Olivia worked at the Science History Institute in Philadelphia and the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Humanities. She is excited to bring her passion for feminist organizing, historical and contemporary, to API.