

MARIA PEREZ

SUMMARY

Democracy and Equity specialist, with 25 years of experience in social justice work.

KEY SKILLS

- Coalition building
- Program development and management
- Popular research
- Participatory processes
- Fundraising
- Bilingual English/Spanish

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Co-Executive Director | Democracy Rising

August 2020 – Present | National

- Build and maintain relationships with national, state, and local organizations, jurisdictions, and leaders working on building a new American democracy
- Facilitate convenings and encourage collaborative work with democracy reform and community transformation groups
- Manage grantmaking to support civic engagement, leadership development, and public education around issues of democracy in local communities

Owner and Principal Consultant | Democracy in Action, LLC

September 2019 – August 2023 | Santa Fe, NM

- Supported national, state, and local election reform organizations and coalitions working on advancing and implementing electoral reforms designed to result in more representative democracy
- Supported local governments (city, county) with race and health equity projects.

Campaigns Manager | Common Cause New Mexico

December 2018 – September 2019 | Albuquerque, NM

- Led municipal campaigns advancing election reforms such as ranked choice voting and public financing.
- Lobbied in the 2019 legislative session.

Director | FairVote New Mexico

March 2017 – December 2018 | Santa Fe, NM

- Ensured implementation of ranked choice voting in Santa Fe.
- Advocated for the successful passing and implementation of ranked choice voting in Las Cruces.
- Built and managed coalitions.
- Worked with local governments and community-based organizations.

Faculty | Santa Fe Community College

2014; 2018 | Santa Fe, NM

- Developed curriculum and served as faculty for New Mexico's first Community Health Worker certificate program.

Outreach Specialist and Organizer | Health Action New Mexico

June 2012 – September 2014 | Northern NM

- Organized campaigns around ACA for frontier communities.
- Engaged multi-sector stakeholders to ensure buy-in, participation, and alignment.

Campaign and Engagement Strategy Consultant | Healthy Richmond (Building Healthy Communities)

April 2016 – October 2016 | Richmond, CA

- Developed campaign planning and management tools to help coalition partners efficiently engage in systems change work.
- Helped identify strategies to ensure all campaigns engaged and provided leadership development opportunities for residents.

Interim Hub Manager / Campaign Lead | East Oakland Building Healthy Communities

October 2014 – March 2016 | Oakland, CA

- Convened leadership and workgroup meetings. Managed staffing and facilitation for all leadership body meetings.
- Monitored and linked emerging local, regional, and state policies to the implementation of the 10-year plan.
- Developed and implemented coalition building strategies.
- Supported all work groups in developing and executing work plans, with strategic support for campaigns around issues of Land Use, Economic Opportunity, Health Access, Community Engagement, and Peace Promotion.

Faculty and Clinic Supervisor | Southwest Acupuncture College

May 2011 – April 2014 | Santa Fe, NM

Founder, Senior Acupuncturist, Community Outreach Director | Brooklyn Community Acupuncture

2006–2010 | Portland, OR

EDUCATION

Master of Public Health

New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM | 2018

Master of Science in Oriental Medicine

Southwest Acupuncture College, Santa Fe, NM | 1999

Bachelor of Science in Biology

University of Oregon, Eugene, OR | 1996

BOARD AND VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

- **Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences' working group on Expanding Representation** (April 2024 - November 2025)
- **Member of the City of Santa Fe's Charter Review Commission** (November 2022 - May 2023)
- **Chair of Innovations and Disruption Working Group** | Ballot Initiative Strategy Center 360 Realignment Coalition, National (May 2019 – July 2023)
- **Member of the Board** | Dirtroad Organizing (August 2025- Present)
- **Member of the Board** | New Energy Economy, Santa Fe, NM (January 2018 – May 2023)
- **Member of the Steering Committee** | New Mexico Health Equity Partnership, Santa Fe, NM (July 2017 – Present)
- **Steering Committee Member, Built Environment-Healthy City Planning Seat** | HOPE Collaborative, Oakland, CA (July 2015 – December 2016)
- **Vice President of the Board** | Health Action New Mexico, Bernalillo, NM (May 2011 – September 2014)