

## Robert M. Penna Biographical Statement



Robert M. Penna, lead author of *Outcome Frameworks*<sup>1</sup> and author of *The Nonprofit Outcomes Toolbox*,<sup>2</sup> holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Boston University with a specialization in urban and municipal affairs. His present work centers on the application of outcomes to nonprofits, capacity assessment, nonprofit communications and reporting, and the application of certain corporate sector outcome-based tools and insights to the work of nonprofits.

As a senior consultant to The Rensselaerville Institute from 2000 to 2008, he made important contributions to numerous Institute projects including the facilitation of seminars at the Institute's *The Center for Outcomes*, work on the Ohio Outcome Funding Community Development project, and projects for the A.E. Casey Foundation, the National Geographic Foundation and the Ford Foundation. He served as Project Lead on the Institute's three United Nations projects in 2003, designed the prototype for the organization's program performance reporting, leading the Institute team creating the materials for the organization's world wide training seminars on the new system, and facilitating training sessions at UN Headquarters in New York. He served as Lead Trainer from 2004 to 2007 for the national outcome training sessions jointly sponsored by the Institute and the Foundation Center, as well as for the Suffolk County Department of Child Protective Services; he provided individual organizational consultation for organizations such as the Community Foundation of Shreveport-Bossier, and authored reports for several Institute clients such as the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development, the American Cancer Society, and the Altria Group's *Arts, Positive Helpings* and *Doors of Hope* programs. He also served as the Institute's resident expert on non-Institute outcome models.

As a private outcome consultant, he has provided management and program analyses for such organizations as the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation and Long Island's Education and Assistance Corporation, and intensive training engagements for organizations such as the Family Services League of Long Island, San Diego Grant Makers, the Dutchess County Arts Council, Social Venture Partners of San Diego, and Venture Philanthropy Partners. He also serves in an ongoing advisory capacity to Charity Navigator on outcomes, as its International Coordinator, and as Program Developer for Family & Children's Service of the Capital Region, an Albany-based nonprofit that is the oldest such organization in the country.

Prior to his joining the Institute, Dr. Penna was a member of the staff of the New York State Senate for 13 years beginning in 1982. Over that period he held several senior-level positions, including Director of Research for the Legislative Commission on Public-Private Cooperation, and Director of Communications for the Senate Finance Committee. A member of the Majority Leader's staff for five years, he oversaw the communications efforts of several members of the Majority Conference, and also held the positions of Director of Operations and Special Projects Director for, respectively, two

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<sup>1</sup> Available at from the Rensselaerville Institute as [www.rinstitute.org](http://www.rinstitute.org)

<sup>2</sup> Published by John Wiley & Sons, May 2011

members of that Conference. Throughout this period, he authored several significant pieces of legislation that went on to become law under various Senate sponsors.

One of New York State's leading experts in special use zoning, he built a portfolio of client communities across the state.

He co-authored the following articles:

- “Eight Outcome Models,” an article in The Evaluation Exchange of the Harvard Family Research Project. (Volume XI, No. 2, Summer 2005. <http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange/issue-archive/evaluation-methodology/eight-outcome-models>),
- “Charity Navigator measures itself, (Alliance Magazine. Volume 15, No.1 March 2010)
- “Rating Healthy Organizational Performance.” (AHP Journal. (Spring 2010).[ <http://www.ahp.org/publicationandtools/AHPpubs/ahpjournal/archives/Pages/Spring2010AHPJournal.aspx>]
- “Charity Navigator Responds” (Viewpoints. Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations at Harvard University. <http://hausercenter.org/iha/archives/338>),
- “The Battle for the Soul of the Nonprofit Sector (Philadelphia Social Innovations Review. May 2010) [http://www.philasocialinnovations.org/site/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=163:the-battle-for-the-soul-of-the-nonprofit-sector&catid=20:what-works-and-what-doesnt&Itemid=31](http://www.philasocialinnovations.org/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=163:the-battle-for-the-soul-of-the-nonprofit-sector&catid=20:what-works-and-what-doesnt&Itemid=31) );
- “A Troubling Disconnect.” (Huffington Post. May 24, 2010. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ken-berger/a-troubling-disconnect-wh\\_b\\_587512.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ken-berger/a-troubling-disconnect-wh_b_587512.html)).
- “Billy Beane and Outcomes: What Can Baseball Tell the Nonprofit World About Measures and Measurement?” (Philadelphia Social Innovations Journal. August 2010) [http://www.philasocialinnovations.org/site/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=199:billy-beane-and-outcomes-what-can-baseball-tell-the-nonprofit-world-about-measures-and-measurement&catid=20:what-works-and-what-doesnt&Itemid=31](http://www.philasocialinnovations.org/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=199:billy-beane-and-outcomes-what-can-baseball-tell-the-nonprofit-world-about-measures-and-measurement&catid=20:what-works-and-what-doesnt&Itemid=31)
- “Transparency and Fundraising: Is There a Connection?” The Nonprofit Technology Network. <http://www.nten.org/blog/2010/09/15/transparency-and-fundraising-there-connection>
- “Why Outcomes, Anyway?” and “Defining Your Outcomes,” in Norman Olshansky & Linda Lysakowski, Eds. You and Your Nonprofit. [Rancho Santa margarita, CA: Charity Channel Press; 2011]

He has also authored the following:

#### **On nonprofit matters**

- “Cuomo Orders Review of Nonprofit Compensation.” Stanford Social Innovation Review. August 5, 2011. [http://www.ssireview.org/opinion/entry/cuomo\\_orders\\_review\\_of\\_nonprofit\\_compensation/](http://www.ssireview.org/opinion/entry/cuomo_orders_review_of_nonprofit_compensation/)

#### **On government operations**

- “\$1.3 Trillion in Broken Federal Spending.” Stanford Social Innovation Review. September 20, 2011. [http://www.ssireview.org/opinion/entry/1.3\\_trillion\\_in\\_broken\\_federal\\_spending/](http://www.ssireview.org/opinion/entry/1.3_trillion_in_broken_federal_spending/)

## **On local government**

- 2011 Albany Times Union, Perspective Section editorial (August 21, 2011) on origin and evolution of local government  
[<http://www.timesunion.com/opinion/article/Sense-of-community-2134205.php>]
- 2008 Albany Times Union, Perspective Section editorial on consolidated local governmental mergers  
[<http://albarchive.merlinone.net/mweb/wmsql.wm.request?oneimage&imageid=7258053>]
- 2002 Albany Times Union, Perspective section guest editorial (December 7, 2008) on consolidated local services
- 1997 Talk of the Towns, feature article on consolidated local services
- 1993 Albany Times Union, Perspective section guest editorial on consolidated local services

## **On adult use zoning**

- 1997 Towns and Topics, feature article, “Sex and the Single Community”
- 1998 Albany Times Union, Perspective section guest editorial, “Cities must prepare for adult businesses.”
- 1999 Towns and Topics, feature article, “Sex and the Single Community II”

Among his blog entries are contributions to *Tactical Philanthropy* [[www.tacticalphilanthropy.com/2009/03/an-experiment-in-outcome-measurement](http://www.tacticalphilanthropy.com/2009/03/an-experiment-in-outcome-measurement)] and the *Ken’s Commentary* blog on the Charity Navigator website, where he acted as co-moderator of a series entitled “The Open Forum on Outcomes,” which was launched in June of 2009 and continued into 2010, and his own blog, *Penna’s Perch*, *The Outcomes Observer*, and *Around the Toolbox* at [www.outcomestoolbox.com](http://www.outcomestoolbox.com).

He has been interviewed on a broad range of public issues by such outlets as the New York Times, the Atlanta Constitution, and the Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel, News Ltd. of Australia, Lawyers’ Week, the Albany Times-Union, the Albany Business Journal, the Schenectady Gazette, the Troy Record, the CBS, CBC and BBC radio networks, and local affiliates of the NBC, ABC, CBS and Fox networks. He has also been interviewed on numerous radio stations across New York, as well as WMHT-TV (PBS).

His public speaking engagements have included such groups as the New York State Bar Association, the New York State Association of Towns, the Adirondack Regional Chambers of Commerce, the New York State Conference of Mayors, the New York State Congress of Parent/Teacher Organizations, and the New York State Rural Housing Coalition. He was also selected as a scheduled presenter at *Evaluation 2005: Crossing Borders, Crossing Boundaries*, the 2005 joint conference of the Canadian Evaluation Society and the American Evaluation Association.

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