

LESLIE A. ANDERSON

Leslie A. Anderson is the Executive Director of the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority (NJRA), a multi-million dollar independent financing authority created by the state of New Jersey to transform urban communities through direct investment and technical support. Leslie is the first African American woman to helm an independent financing authority in New Jersey and thanks to her tenacity, effectiveness, and vision she has been reappointed to this position by three consecutive governors.

Under her bold leadership, NJRA has used its financial resources to leverage over \$3.8 billion in new investments, helping to redevelop some of New Jersey's most economically challenged neighborhoods. Moreover, the authority committed \$418 million in direct investments in 44 eligible communities. This has led to the creation of 15,000 new housing units and 10 million square feet of commercial and retail space.

In 2014, NJRA applied for and received \$20 million in New Market Tax Credits from the federal government. These tax credits provide subsidies for commercial and retail redevelopment projects in low-income communities. Under Leslie's stewardship, NJRA leveraged these subsidies to advance much needed economic development projects in Camden and Newark.

In 2006, Leslie created the NJRA Redevelopment Training Institute (RTI) to provide learning opportunities centered on the complexities of redevelopment and best practices for community revitalization. Since its inception, RTI has trained over 2,000 attorneys, elected officials, developers, and non-profits. It has also received certification from the American Institute of Certified Planners, the Northeastern Economic Developers Association, and Continuing Legal Education through the NJ Supreme Court.

Prior to joining the staff of NJRA, Leslie served as a Policy Advisor to former New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman. In this capacity, she was responsible for working on economic, commerce, and urban policy. She played an integral role in the creation of Governor Whitman's urban economic strategy that was enacted into law in July 1996 through the passage of the New Jersey Urban Redevelopment Act.

Leslie began her career in her hometown of Plainfield, New Jersey where she spent nearly a decade working in the city's economic development office. She began her tenure as a planner, but after distinguishing herself, Leslie was promoted several times and ultimately selected by the mayor to serve as the Executive Director of the Office of Economic Development. In this position, she was responsible for the overall creation, management, and day-to-day operation of the city's programs to attract and retain businesses, revitalize disadvantaged neighborhoods, and spur economic growth. She was instrumental in helping the city to establish an Urban Enterprise Zone program, which focuses on attracting and retaining businesses through an array of financial incentives.

Leslie remains heavily involved in the Plainfield community. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. which is a public service organization that strives to confront the problems facing disadvantaged African Americans. Leslie has served in various leadership positions in the organization including as the president of the Central Jersey Alumnae Chapter. Currently, she serves her local chapter as a member of the Scholarship Committee and as the Chairperson of Fundraising. In her role as Fundraising Chairperson, Leslie has spearheaded the chapter's efforts to raise over \$200,000 to support community programming in Central New Jersey.

Leslie is also president of the New Horizons College Club (NHCC) Board of Directors, headquartered in Plainfield, NJ. The program mentors high school students that are seeking to further their academic goals by attending college. NHCC, Inc. was established in 1970 and incorporated by Leslie Anderson and five other committed individuals in 1994 to ensure its legacy. Through her efforts with New Horizons College Club, Leslie has personally mentored hundreds of students, who have realized great success in their personal and professional endeavors. In addition, Leslie is a Leadership NJ Fellow, and holds active memberships in the Penn State Alumni Association, Women in Housing and Finance, and the International Council for Economic Development (IEDC).

Leslie's commitment to service has earned her numerous awards and recognition. In March, she had the distinction of being named as one of NJBIZ's Best 50 Women in Business. In 2016, she was recognized by the Black Alumni of Penn State University for her outstanding work in public service. Leslie is also the 2014 recipient of the Chester Holmes Humanitarian Award; the 2014 recipient of the Chris Kjeldsen Community Service Award; the 2014 recipient of the Garden State Bar Association's Roger M. Yancey Award (one of three non-lawyers to receive this prestigious award); the 2004 recipient of the Girls Scouts of Delaware Raritan Women of Distinction Award; and a 2003 inductee in the Plainfield High School Hall of Fame.

Leslie earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science at Pennsylvania State University.