2022 Program Participants



Michael Anderson is the Content Development Specialist for the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce. He has created various forms of content for nearly 20 years and enjoys using his skills to promote the mission and initiatives of the Chamber as well as share stories about business professionals throughout the borough. In addition to creating content, Michael visit businesses to inform them about free city services through the Chamber On-The-Go program and currently serves as the Project Manager for the Chamber's affiliation with the New York State COVID-19 Pandemic Small Business Recovery Grant Program. In his spare time, Michael enjoys watching sports – especially the Dallas Cowboys and New York Mets – and planning a December wedding with his fiancée, Tiffany.



Kim Avilez is a native New Yorker, wife, and mom currently residing in Staten Island, NY. She is a former Vice President for JPMorgan Chase Bank, in their Commercial Bank & Small Business Banking Division. She led a national achieving team and managed portfolios for companies with revenues from \$3 to \$45 million. Leveraging her experience in business development, she transitioned from supporting small businesses to becoming a business owner with the establishment of Glow Consulting Services, Glow Event Management, and Glow Travel Group. She is the newly appointed CEO & Executive Director for Historic Tappen Park Community Partnership. Historic Tappen Park Community Partnership is a nonprofit organization supporting responsible economic development within Staten Island's North Shore.

She is an active board member for several non-profit organizations, serving as the President of the Minority Women in Business Association of Staten Island, VP Alliances & Events for the National Association of Women Business Owners-NYC Chapter, and VP Phenomenal Women Association Inc.



Ariana Branchini is the Director of Economic Development for the Alliance for Downtown New York, Lower Manhattan's business improvement district. In her role, she focuses on placemaking initiatives and small business assistance programs.







Suzy Changar is the Vice President of Communications and Marketing at Hudson Square Connection. She is a dynamic marketing executive with career success developing and deploying strategic marketing plans, designing and launching effective public relations campaigns, and relationship building. She has a demonstrated history of working in a variety of fields from civic to entertainment, and Suzy's strengths include not-for-profit, project management, event planning, administration, community relations and economic development. She has excellent communication skills proven by the ability to successfully manage large projects while working with people from diverse backgrounds. Suzy is equally comfortable speaking with a local shop owner as she is presenting to a Board of Directors. What is harder to see is that Suzy is a leader at building relationships and creating community. She loves connecting people with experiences and places that enhance their lives. She truly believes that people inherently need to feel they are a part of something, and helps craft these experiences. Suzy believes in the relationship that place and community play with each other, and prides herself in being a conduit able to connect these dots.



Jim Diego is a Senior Project Manager at Hester Street, a nonprofit planning, design and development firm specializing in community engagement and capacity building, with a goal of equitable, sustainable and resilient neighborhoods and cities. A native of Wichita, Kansas, he holds a Masters in Urban Planning from Hunter College, as well as a Bachelors of Science in Architecture from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, At Hester Street, Jim leads multiple large scale projects working with the New York City Community Land Initiative and Together We Thrive - Black Business Network. Prior to Hester Street, Jim worked at Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, where among his major projects included the RFP and sale of an open air parking lot to a developer building 500+ units of affordable housing (a portion of which will be dedicated to artists) with prime storefront retail; and securing New Market Tax Credits to finance the construction of Jamaica and Southeast Queens' first-ever coworking space and stateof-the-art business training center, a project helping to catalyze the area's growing entrepreneurship industry and anchoring an innovation corridor running through the center of the downtown. Earlier in his career, Jim worked at the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services, serving in multiple roles including assistant architect, division advisor, senior portfolio planner, and city planner, where most of his work focused on city agency office spaces within its owned and leased portfolio, targeting and identifying underutilized office space and working to consolidate those spaces as needed. Outside of work, he is an avid world traveler and prolific distance runner, with marathon and half marathon finishes in all 50 states and several foreign countries.



Chandler Forsythe is an economic development professional and urbanist. As Program Manager at the NoHo Business Improvement District, he works to support the merchant community through resource sharing, marketing, and fostering connections. The BID, which was founded to enhance NoHo as a downtown destination, strives to improve quality-of-life for residents and promote neighborhood vitality. Chandler has worked in many different roles within government and urban planning, and was first formally introduced to economic development as a board member of Austin's University Area Partners. His passion is to understand how people and places work together to make spaces thrive. Chandler greatly enjoy the unique structure inherent to neighborhood development organizations, and looks forward to the continued growth in his current role and field.







Jennifer Garofolo was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. In 1997, while working in the city healthcare system, she received her Master of Arts degree in Health Administration, practically applying this knowledge as a Patient Advocate and Practice Administrator. In 2013, as a response to the need to have flexible hours and the desire to be "her own boss," she started a professional organizing business. She empowered individuals and small businesses in de-cluttering and developing systems that promote efficiency and peace. In 2017, she joined The Staten Island Business Outreach Center as a Business Development Specialist. In this current role, she again supports small local businesses as they start up or in expansion. Jennifer assists in developing business plans, marketing strategies, securing loans and obtaining Minority/Women's Business Certificates. She also offers her clients webinars on timely topics hosted both by her and community partners. Currently, she resides in Staten Island with her 14-year-old son, Benjamin and their cat, Willie.



Alex Geller joined NYPACE in 2021 to manage the Founders Forward Program, a partnership with JPMorgan Chase, and NYPACE's Entrepreneur Sprints. Both programs connect local small business owners with teams of impact-driven advisors, recruited from top firms, to address the entrepreneurs' specific business needs with implementable solutions. Prior to joining NYPACE, Alex served for the past eight years as a public librarian. In this role, he directed a working group comprised of local government officials, service providers, and business leaders to develop Arlington (VA) County's Digital Equity Action Plan and the county's first placed-based health equity initiative. He is the founder of both the Berkshire Seed Library, which supports community resilience through neighborhood gardening, and the P.E.P. Cafe, which provides work readiness skills training for students with developmental disabilities. And in 2021, he was a Penguin Random House Library Innovation awardee for his MyBook service, a free book program for elementary school students to prevent learning losses due to COVID-related closures. Alex received his Bachelor of Arts in History from Oberlin College and his Master of Library Science and Master of Arts in History degrees from Indiana University.



Michael Gonzalez became involved in the Columbus Amsterdam BID as a volunteer during high school and continued his involvement through his studies at Hostos College. Becoming a full time employee, currently the program director and working on programming and neighborhood development projects. Michael's passion for his community and environmentalism resulted in receiving grants to increase greenery and programming to benefit the residents in the area.







Laura Jean-Jacques is a Community Builder from Flatbush with over a decade of successful experience in frontline community organizing and partnerships. As a first-generationer, who was born in Brooklyn and raised in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti as a young child, Laura's commitment to immigrant communities runs deep. Laura specializes in economic development and regularly engages with local stakeholders, small businesses, and community-based organizations to build stronger, viable futures. A firm believer of 'prosperity for all', Laura has dedicated her life to developing and providing resources to assist underserved communities with getting an equitable seat at the table. Laura is the Program Manager of Neighborhood Economic Development at the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, currently overseeing commercial district needs assessment (CDNA) and revitalization efforts in the Canarsie and Homecrest neighborhoods. In addition to her amazing community work, Laura is the proud Founder of Zansèt Tea Co (www.zansetteaco.com)— a Brooklyn-based organic loose-leaf tea and botanicals company started in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Sam Massol is the Program Manager for commercial revitalization in Corona at QEDC. Sam is now coordinating with QEDC's local partners in Corona Plaza and along the Junction and Roosevelt Ave corridors, engaging property owners, business owners, residents, and community stakeholders to determine the community's local needs and priorities in revitalizing this important commercial area. A native New Yorker with a background in community building and civic engagement, he is passionate about supporting small businesses and appreciating the cultural impacts in Queens' neighborhoods.



Kalvis Mikelsteins is an Urban Planner and Public Space Manager with a passion for community engagement and local economic development. Currently the Director of Operations at the DUMBO BID, his professional experience includes housing policy design and outreach to First Nations communities, data analysis and research related to Sea Level Rise in New York City, and urban development processes in North America and Europe. Kalvis moved to New York in 2017 and loves exploring everything city-related: urban history, cycling, housing policy, street fairs, and more!







Hope Moriki works alongside the Executive Director as the Flatbush Avenue & Church Avenue BIDs' Project Coordinator. Her duties include helping to manage daily operations, grant and policy administration, event coordination, and the marketing and promotion of the area as a local and citywide destination. Hope spent several years as a volunteer treasurer for two school programs, worked as a virtual event coordinator, and managed a small business coffee shop. She lives nearby on the border of Windsor Terrace/ Kensington, Brooklyn with her family.



Matthew Morowitz is the Commercial Revitalization Program Manager at the Alliance for Coney Island and has an eclectic mix of experiences in the urbanism field. In addition to holding a master's degree in urban design, he has previously worked with neighborhood-focused organizations, public art, and urban archaeology here in NYC. He is excited to bring all of his knowledge and experiences to the Coro Neighborhood Leadership program, as well as learn from and develop relationships with the other participants.







Tiara Robertson joined Bridge Street Development Corporation in 2019 and spearheaded the small business technical assistance activities under the NYC SBS Strategic Impact COVID-19 Commercial District Support Program. Currently, as Commercial Revitalization Program Manager, Tiara is part of a cohort of other NYC Small Business Services Avenue NYC grant-funded program managers dedicated to executing commercial revitalization programs in commercial districts across New York City. Tiara provides one-on-one and remote technical assistance, support, counseling and referral services to local businesses impacted by COVID-19 and is actively engaged in the organization and support of new and existing merchant associations. Tiara also provides technical assistance and aids small businesses with grant opportunities under the LISC NYC Small Business Development Grant, Since this program began in April 2021 Tiara has supported minority and women-owned business in obtaining a \$2,500 grant from LISC NYC. Tiara's current activities also includes identifying and assisting applicants for the NYS COVID-19 Pandemic Small Business Recovery Grant Program and participants for the LISC NYC-Verizon Small **Business Digital Ready Program**



Mallory Thatch is the Program Manager for Commercial Revitalization along Belmont Avenue at the Brownsville Community Justice Center. The program manager position is funded through the NYC Small Business Services and focuses on the revitalization of Belmont Ave. Mallory works with business owners to determine what support is needed along the corridor. She also incorporates programming to increase foot traffic and interest on Belmont Ave. Among her commercial efforts she also works alongside the rest of the Placemaking and Workforce Development Department on increasing quality of life as a whole in Brownsville. Mallory holds a bachelor's degree in Urban Planning and Development from Ball State University. Currently, she serves on the Ball State Alumni Diversity and Inclusivity Committee as well as the Urban Planning Alumni Board. Mallory was recently selected as co-chair for the Brooklyn Economic Justice Project (BEJP). This collective includes a variety of nonprofit organizations in Brooklyn dedicated to black and brown liberation and increasing access to financial and informative resources. Before her work with BCJC Mallory worked with a variety of midwestern communities primarily in Indiana focusing on revitalization and longrange planning.



Oliver Vega is the Marketing and Merchant Outreach Coordinator at the Pitkin Avenue BID. He handles the BID's external communications, and coordinates and plans BID initiatives and events with the Executive Director. Oliver is a graduate of Hunter College Master of Urban Planning program. He is passionate about building initiatives that foster economic development and equity. For the past six years, Oliver has worked at several NYC BIDs in different capacities, including communications, marketing, outreach, programming, planning, and development. Oliver is attuned to understanding the complex relationship between the merchants and the communities they serve. Oliver aims to develop long term solutions to support both the merchant and communities' needs, and he strives to bring a great sense of empathy to his work.







Selamawit Yemeru is the Avenue NYC Program Manager with the Morris Park Business Improvement District. Selam is Bronx bred and has been fortunate enough to have served her home borough throughout her professional career. She has experience working for the Department of Parks & Recreation as a Conservation Fellow in the Bronx Office, as well as experience working for the Department of Small Business Services as a Neighborhood 360 fellow in the South Bronx. Having worked for the Third Avenue BID as a Senior Coordinator of Public Programming and Engagement, she continues her BID work currently at the Morris Park BID. Selam holds a Master of Science in Design and Urban Ecologies from the New School's Parson's School of Design and a Bachelor of Science Environmental Studies from the University of Richmond. Selam is excited for what her future in store.



Past Participants

Note: Organizations listed represent participants' employers at the time of the program.

2021 Program Graduates

Rachel Brandon

Village Alliance

Katherine Brill

Grand Street Business Improvement District

Ryan Cagle

BOC Network

Tali Cantor

Union Square Partnership

Ariana Cipriani

Mosholu Preservation Corporation

Lorial Crowder

Community League of the Heights (CLOTH)

Abigail Ellman

Cooper Square Committee

Regina Fojas

Times Square Alliance

Jennifer Furioli

Jamaica Center Business Improvement District

Katty Garces

Woodhaven Business Improvement District

Ionna Jimenez

Brownsville Community Justice Center

Angela Pennyfeather

Fifth Avenue Association

Lisa-Marie Pierre

Ascend NYC

Dina Rabiner

Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

Leonor Reina

REMA4US

Claudia Rincon

Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership

Catherine Roepke

Meatpacking Business Improvement District

Dr. Camelia Tepelus

Morris Park Business Improvement District

Neil Wagner

Queens Chamber of Commerce





2020 Program Graduates

Abeer Alharazi

Yemeni American Merchants Alliance (YAMA)

Jahnavi Aluri

Jamaica Center Business Improvement District

Sean Ansanelli

Rockaway Business Alliance

Natalie Armstrong

Downtown Alliance

Lynette Battle

Bed-Stuy Gateway Business Improvement District

Angella Brown

Fulton Area Business (FAB) Alliance

Kristin Brown

Myrtle Avenue Business Improvement District

James Campbell

Atlantic Avenue Business Improvement District

Yasmin Cruz

Westchester Square Business Improvement District

Philip Gordon

Lincoln Square Business Improvement District

Jonathan Hawkins

Garment District Alliance

Tiffany lung

Greater Hunts Point Economic Development Corporation

Kimberly Lynch

Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership

Nikkole Mojica

Hudson Yards/Hell's Kitchen Alliance

Nicole Paynter

Columbus Avenue Business Improvement District

Ann Marie Selzer

Project Hospitality

Sam Smouha

Queens Economic Development Corporation (QEDC)

Katherine Torres

Urban Health Plan

Brandon Zwagerman

SoHo Broadway Initiative





2019 Program Graduates

Albert Kakudji

Made in Brownsville

Amy Tse

Meatpacking Business Improvement District

Christina Chavez

Long Island City Partnership

David Estrada

Sunset Park Business Improvement District

Erin Piscopink

Grand Street Business Improvement District

Hai-Yin Kong

THINK!CHINATOWN

Heather Ducharme

Downtown Alliance

Jacqueline Tesman

Community League of the Heights (CLOTH)

Javier Medrano

Third Avenue Business Improvement District

Joanna Castro

Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance

Joanna Tallantire

Park Slope Fifth Avenue Business Improvement District

Jose Taveras

Greater Hunts Point Economic Development Corporation

Lupe Ramsey

Flatbush Development Corporation

Michael Devigne

Business Outreach Center Network (BOCNET)

Morgan Fowler

Harlem Park to Park

Oma Holloway

Bridge Street Development Corporation

Raquel Olivares

Woodhaven Business Improvement District

Rebecca Lieberman

Times Square Alliance

Shannon Goodson

Davidson Community Center

William Lewis

Village Alliance Business Improvement District





2018 Program Graduates

Alexandra Silversmith

Alliance for Coney Island

Amanda Zenteno

Bay Ridge 5th Avenue Business Improvement District

Ariana Hellerman

Downtown Brooklyn Partnership

Brigette Blood

RiseBoro Community Partnership

Cordelia Persen

NoHo Business Improvement District

Dominique Green

Lower East Side Partnership

Egaudy Gomez

Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

Gloria J. Medina

Queens Chamber of Commerce

Jaime-Faye Bean

Sunnyside Shines Business Improvement District

Janet W. Dugo

Staten Island Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Inc.

Jeff Brault

Manhattan Chamber of Commerce

Kimberley Wong

BronxWorks

Megan Garcia

Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership

Michelle Cruz

Union Settlement

Natalie Mendell

Grand Street Business Improvement District

Nina Flores

Staten Island Business Outreach Center

Patricia Gouris

Hudson Yards/Hell's Kitchen Alliance

Theo Boguszewski

Rockaway Business Alliance/Perch Advisors

Tokunbo Anifalaje

Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation





2017 Program Graduates

Alix Fellman

Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDco)

Andrew Stricklin

Garment District Alliance

Clara Schuhmacher

DUMBO Improvement District

David Shuffler

Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice

Gail Davis

Local Development Corporation of East New York

Glenn Greenidge

Sutphin Boulevard Business Improvement District

Isidro Medina

Washington Heights Business Improvement District

Jacob McNally

Hudson Square Connection

Jane Wolterding

Alliance for Downtown New York

Jennifer Tausig

Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District

Jesse Gericke

Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District

Jessie Lee

Renaissance Economic Development Corporation

Kelly Vasquez

Neighborhood Initiatives Development Corporation

Layman Lee

Community Solutions

Leslie Ramos

82nd Street Partnership

Majora Carter

Majora Carter Group, LLC

Maria Diaz

Greenwich Village Chelsea Chamber of Commerce

Nick Petrie

Make the Road New York

Paula Horowitz

Grand Central Partnership

Scott Grimm-Lyon

Church Avenue & Flatbush Avenue Business Improvement Districts





2016 Program Graduates

Anna Adler

Fourth Arts Block

Carey King

New Harlem East Merchants Association

Christine Silletti

DUMBO Improvement District

Daniel Scorse

Hudson Yards/Hell's Kitchen Alliance

David Rose

Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership

Homer Hill

Grand Street Business Improvement District

Jacqueline Kennedy

Brownsville Partnership

Jarrod Grim

Alliance for Downtown New York

Jesse Solomon

Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation

Kriss Casanova

Union Square Partnership

Linda Humphrey

Beach 116th Street Partnership

Lowell Herschberger

Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation

Mark Dicus

SoHo Broadway Initiative

Marques Payne

The Bronx Chamber of Commerce

Michael Tsang

Two Bridges Neighborhood Council

Patreinnah Acosta-Pelle

Bradhurst Merchants Association

Ryan Gleason

Staten Island Chamber of Commerce

Tameka Pierre-Louis

Queens Library

TJ Witham

Times Square Alliance

Trey Jenkins

Alliance for Coney Island

Whitney Barrat

Old Seaport Alliance





2015 Program Graduates

Andrea Devening

Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation

Barbara Askins

125th Street Business Improvement District

Chad Purkey

Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership

Daniella LaRocco

Village Alliance

Jenna Petok

Long Island City Partnership

Johanna Zaki

Alliance for Coney Island

John Rodriguez

Staten Island Economic Development Corporation

Kathleen Sforza

Northfield Community Local Development Corporation

Lamgen León

Chinatown Partnership

Lawrence Blaber, Jr.

Operation Hope

Nupur Chaudhury

Rebuild by Design

Rhonda Binda

Jamaica Center Business Improvement District

Ryan Pukos

Grand Central Partnership

Sarah Hornung

East Midtown Partnership

Tasemere Gathers

South Bronx Overall Economic Development

Corporation

Tom Harris

Times Square Alliance

Victor Wong

NerdWallet





2014 Program Graduates

Belle Domingo

Times Square Alliance

Brigit Pinnell

Montague Street Business Improvement District

Cheryl Tse

Neighborhood Plaza Partnership

Dana Frankel

Long Island City Partnership

Duane Roggendorff

Grand Central Partnership

Jamila Diaz

South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation

Jennifer Stokes

Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership

Katie Mirkin

Flatbush Avenue & Church Avenue Business Improvement Districts

Kristin LaBuz

DUMBO Improvement District

Krzysztof Sadlej

Beach 116th Street Partnership

Marcia Cameron

Mosholu Preservation Corporation

Mark Caserta

Park Slope Fifth Avenue Business Improvement District

Minnie Graham

Empowerment Zone Inc.

Myles Monaghan

Community League of the Heights, Inc.

Natalie Raben

Lower East Side Partnership

Nikoa Evans-Hendricks

Harlem Park to Park

Patrick Kwan

Chinatown Partnership

Philip Marino

Belmont Business Improvement District

Priscilla Marco

Historic Tappen Park Community Partnership

Sara Romanoski

East Village Community Coalition

Wilma Alonso

Fordham Road Business Improvement District





2013 Program Graduates

Akila A. Shenoy

Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDco)

Ariel Ferreira

Washington Heights Business Improvement District

Chris Martin

DUMBO Improvement District

Daniel Coates

Make the Road New York

David Thorpe

East River Development Alliance Long Island City Merchant's Association

Felicia Tunnah

Union Square Partnership

Jane Kojima

Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership

John Choe

One Flushing Community Economic Development Center

Josef Szende

Atlantic Avenue Business Improvement District

Justin K. Rodgers

Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

Kamillah Hanks

Historic Tappen Park Community Partnership

Leigh A. Eisen

Fashion Center Business Improvement District

Lisa Sorin

Westchester Square Business Improvement District

Michelle McClymont

Flatbush Nostrand Junction Business Improvement District

Peter Arndtsen

Columbus Amsterdam Business Improvement District

Rachel Thieme

Sunnyside Shines Business Improvement District

Renée Schoonbeek

Hudson Square Business Improvement District

Ryan Grew

MetroTech Business Improvement District





2012 Program Graduates

Andrew Flamm

Renaissance Economic Development Corporation

Artineh Havan

Grand Street Business Improvement District

Dan Miner

Long Island City Partnership

Daniel Bernstein

Fordham Road Business Improvement District

Daniel Murphy

Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District

Daryl D. Garrett, Jr.

Hope Community, Inc.

Doug Jones

Bed-Stuy Gateway Business Improvement District

Garrett J. Lucien

South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation

James D. Ellis

Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

Kenneth Mbonu

Bridge Street Development Corporation

Loretta Cauldwell

Forest Avenue Business Improvement District

Medina Sadiq

Southern Boulevard Business Improvement District

Melissa Hodge-Miller

Jamaica Center Business Improvement District

Meredith Phillips Almeida

Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership

Michael Lambert

Mosholu Preservation Corporation

Naomi Hersson-Ringskog

No Longer Empty

Rebeca Ramirez

Heart of Brooklyn

Seth Taylor

82nd Street Partnership

Wellington Z. Chen

Chinatown Partnership

William Kelley

Village Alliance





2011 Program Graduates

Angelina M. Ramirez

Washington Heights Business Improvement District

Bob Zuckerman

Lower East Side Partnership

Dale Charles

Pratt Area Community Council

Elizabeth Demetriou

Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation

Ira Jones-Cimini

Abyssinian Development Corporation

Kerry A. McLean

Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation

Kevin Alexander

Rockaway Development & Revitalization Corporation

Kevin Kong

Renaissance Economic Development Corporation

Kevin Tolan

Fulton Mall Improvement Association

LaQuita Henry

Heritage Heights Village Commercial Revitalization Initiative

Laurel Brown

Nostrand Park

Lauren Danziger

Greenwich Village Chelsea Chamber of Commerce

Lauren Elvers Collins

Church Avenue Business Improvement District

Lisa Thompson

Bed-Stuy Gateway Business Improvement District

M. Blaise Backer

Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership

Michele Sledge

Northfield Community Local Development Corporation

Phillip Kellogg

Fulton Area Business Alliance Business Improvement District

Ralph Memoli

Lincoln Square Business Improvement District

Ricardi Calixte

Queens Economic Development Corporation

Simone Louise Price

Sutphin Boulevard Business Improvement District



