

# PRESS RELEASE

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### **Michael G. Johnson Appointed Executive Director of the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC)**

Brooklyn, New York – January 29, 2026 – The Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC), a leader in community development, family and youth services, urban agriculture, college success and economic development programming, today announced that Michael G. Johnson has been appointed Executive Director, effective **February 2, 2026**. Mr. Johnson will be responsible for end-to-end leadership of the organization, from setting the vision to direct oversight of day-to-day program execution, services, development, and operations. He succeeds Michelle Neugebauer, who is retiring and whose longstanding tenure and measurable success at CHLDC spans more than 40 years.

Mr. Johnson brings to CHLDC a proven record of developing and driving impactful programs and opportunities that yield positive results. He has held leadership positions in economic development, corporate philanthropy and public service, and for more than 25 years has made it his personal journey and mission to help lift communities where all families and children can thrive. He is a 2010 recipient of MIT's prestigious [Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership Award](#) for exceptional service to communities of color.

“Michael’s leadership style is grounded in humility, collaboration, and a genuine respect for the communities he serves. I am personally excited to welcome him to CHLDC and confident that he will lead with both heart and purpose as we continue advancing our mission in East New York.”  
—Michael Lawes, President, Board of Directors

“I am incredibly proud of all that CHLDC has accomplished over the last 40+ years and know that Michael Johnson will lead the organization forward with commitment, passion, grit, and the determination needed to support the young people, residents, and small businesses of East New York to thrive and advance through these current turbulent times.”  
—Executive Director Michelle Neugebauer

Mr. Johnson joins CHLDC from the Harlem Educational Activities Fund (HEAF), a celebrated college preparatory and career access organization, where he served as its President & CEO. Mr. Johnson led HEAF through its most challenging period following the COVID global pandemic, sustaining existing funding and partner relationships, while building new ones and attracting resources needed to endure the organization’s middle to high school recruitment pipeline and its long-standing international/domestic summer-travel program. Under his leadership HEAF is now

positioned to serve more than 600 students, preserving its cornerstone after-school curriculum as well as providing direct college and career counseling services to five partner high schools in Brooklyn, Harlem and the Bronx.

Prior to HEAF, Mr. Johnson served as Director of Community Life at The Community Builders (TCB), a nationally recognized non-profit focused on affordable and mixed-income residential and commercial properties, where he was responsible for TCB's place-based model that provides stable housing and builds partnerships as platforms for residents and neighborhoods to achieve success. Mr. Johnson also served as Vice President, Global Philanthropy at JPMorgan Chase & Co., where he led the Community Development portfolio for the New York Metropolitan area, and a national portfolio involving seed capital and data-driven solutions for neighborhoods through Partnership for Raising Opportunities (PRO) Neighborhoods. Through its JPMorgan Chase Foundation, the company gives over \$220 annually to non-profits in more than 40 countries in six continents.

“I am honored to be joining Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation and to build on its deep roots in East New York. CHLDC’s commitment to residents, families, and community-led change is inspiring, and I look forward to listening, learning, and working alongside the community to continue this important work.”

—Incoming Executive Director Michael G. Johnson

Mr. Johnson brings to CHLDC extensive experience in navigating local government, having worked in four different city administrations in New York and New Jersey. Prior to JPMorgan Chase & Co., Mr. Johnson was Chief of Staff to the General Manager and Director of Customer Operations at the New York City Housing Authority. Earlier in his career, he held leadership roles in both New York City and Newark, New Jersey, focused on creating economic opportunities and growth, while improving the quality of life for children and families in neighborhoods.

Mr. Johnson holds a Master of Arts in Political Science from the CUNY Graduate Center, a Master in City Planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Virginia.

Mr. Johnson is a lifelong Brooklynite and resides in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood with his wife and three children.

#### **About Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation:**

Founded in 1983, Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC) is a community development organization and settlement house rooted in East New York, Brooklyn. CHLDC works in partnership with residents to advance racial and social justice, stabilize families, and create pathways to opportunity through housing development and preservation, workforce development, education and youth services, small business support, community organizing, and environmental sustainability.

Over more than four decades, CHLDC has grown from a single program into a comprehensive, place-based organization serving more than 20,000 residents annually, with a staff of over 500 and an operating budget of approximately \$28 million. CHLDC has developed and preserved affordable housing and community facilities, helped tenants become homeowners, supported small businesses along local commercial corridors, and led advocacy efforts that have secured significant public and private investment for East New York. United Community Centers, a settlement house that operated in East New York for more than 60+ years, and pioneered community-driven public health, urban agriculture, community organizing, and youth services initiatives, merged with CHLDC two years ago - we proudly carry their legacy forward.

Guided by a commitment to community leadership and residents' voices, CHLDC continues to build a more equitable, stable, and thriving East New York for current and future generations.

For more information, visit [www.cypresshills.org](http://www.cypresshills.org)