

# News Release

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River District Association

[www.riverdistrictassociation.com](http://www.riverdistrictassociation.com)



## **River District Association team grows, adds new staff to work towards North Main Street revitalization efforts**

DANVILLE VA – River District Association (RDA) is excited to announce that Lashawn Farmer has been added their downtown revitalization team.

Lashawn Farmer joins RDA as the Program & Services Director - Design and Expansion in January 2023. Farmer formerly served as Chief Operating Officer for The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Danville Area. There, she oversaw the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of a broad range of programs for youth in the Club and community and will now bring these skills to RDA. Mrs. Farmer, in this new position, will enable RDA to broaden its design initiatives in the River District and implement the Main Street Four Point Approach and community engagement in the North Main business district.

Among many projects, Farmer will be integral in driving new programs and services in the North Main Street corridor that are being developed from a DHCD Community Resurgence grant award of \$150,000 dedicated to the North Main Street Business District Revitalization work. RDA, in partnership with the Danville Regional Foundation and the City of Danville Office of Economic Development, will provide services to the corridor including business assistance, marketing, façade improvement programs, and place making rooted in economic inclusion that prioritizes the neighborhood’s resident’s ideas and values in economic development decisions. The North Main Street initiative will not be incorporated into the current footprint of the River District, but instead will be recognized as an independent neighborhood business district with a distinct identity that reflects the history of the corridor and will be driven by community input and engagement.

“We are very excited to have Lashawn Farmer join our RDA Team. We strive for a culture of excellence in our organization, both inside and out, and Lashawn most certainly exemplifies that in all that she does” said Diana Schwartz, Executive Director of the River District Association. “We are thrilled that she has chosen to apply her many talents to our work implementing the Main Street America approach in the Dan River Region and are looking forward to celebrating the many milestones and success that we will achieve by using one of the most successful economic development programs in the country.”

In addition to her professional experience, Farmer brings to RDA her skills as a catalyst for positive change throughout the Dan River Region and the Commonwealth. Farmer currently contributes to our community through service on the Board of Third Chance Housing, Project Literacy and The Dan River Region Nonprofit Network. Lashawn is a Co-Owner of Defining Purpose the Black Women’s Collective, a member of More Than A Statistic and Kazelle and Co., is dedicated to advocacy and unity projects around diversity, equity and inclusion.

“By being born and raised in this community,” says Farmer, “I feel the desire to be the bridge of aspiration. Growing up, I remember “coming to town” and being in love with the Downtown and the North Main area. It was the core of the city and center for all the community needs. I will forever remember all the love and laughs from family and friends that we would come in contact with when we would shop and stroll. By being at RDA, I am excited that we can provide the community the capacity to reimagine and bring that luminosity back. We are building a society that is leading with love and is full of diversity, equity and inclusion. RDA is creating a narrative that focuses on growth, culture and impact and everyone will be exhilarated that they work, live, play and/or pray in Danville. And, all constituents will be part of the system that is a legacy of togetherness. “

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The River District Association was organized in 1999 as the Downtown Danville Association.

In May 2015, the organization was renamed the River District Association to complement the City’s River District brand and is an accredited Virginia and National Main Street Community.