

ANNETTA SEECHARRAN

Chief Executive Officer · Community Development · Economic Equity & Housing Justice

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EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Visionary leader and path breaker with 30 years of experience driving systemic change through bold policy, program innovation, stakeholder alignment, and capital mobilization. A champion for social justice, economic equity, and affordable housing with a proven track record in building unlikely coalitions across government, private sector, and nonprofit partners to unlock capital and opportunity. Skilled at translating vision into strategy, navigating complex institutional environments, and advocating for underserved communities from local to national levels. Built two groundbreaking organizations from nascent stages to leading institutions. Nationally recognized spokesperson featured in the NYT, WSJ, CNN, NBC, CBS, NPR, and more. An immigrant who grew up in the Bronx, Annetta brings lived experience of economic marginalization and systemic inequity to her work, transforming communities.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Affordable Housing & Community Development · Small Business & Commercial Corridors · Government & Private Sector Partnerships · Strategic Vision & Execution · Data-Driven Leadership · Stakeholder Alignment & Coalition Building · Policy Advocacy · Capital & Fundraising · Team & Culture Building · Media & Public Speaking

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Executive Director | **Chhaya Community Development Corporation** | Queens, NY | 2016 – Present

Transformed a financially fragile community development organization into a nationally recognized powerhouse for housing justice, economic equity, and immigrant rights—growing budget, staff, and mission impact fourfold.

- ❖ Pioneered multi-sector funding strategy, mobilizing \$10M+ for the first time by forging new partnerships with federal, state, and local government agencies—demonstrating ability to unlock public capital at scale through strategic stakeholder alignment.
- ❖ Shaped philanthropic strategy by engaging multiple major NYC foundations in Chhaya’s policy agenda, resulting in their adoption of housing policy priorities aligned with our community development work.
- ❖ Secured landmark policy victories in stabilizing LMI homeownership: NYS Homeownership Assistance Fund, advanced ADU/basement apartment legalization at the state level, and won significant zoning reform through NYC’s City of Yes regulations—directly expanding the supply of affordable homeownership.
- ❖ Quadrupled homeownership programs, including foreclosure prevention and first-time homebuyer initiatives; published two groundbreaking reports on affordable homeownership loss in Queens; laid the groundwork for Community Land Trusts (CLTs) in the borough.
- ❖ Launched and scaled an economic justice portfolio—free tax preparation, financial counseling, credit building, and small business development—serving the most economically vulnerable immigrant populations with tools for lasting economic mobility.
- ❖ Directed crisis capital deployment during COVID-19: secured and distributed nearly \$1M in emergency rent assistance, food security programming, and small business relief, protecting hundreds of families and entrepreneurs from displacement and closure.
- ❖ Led unprecedented multi-year capital campaign to build the first-ever South Asian multi-service community center; secured funding for two locations, advancing social infrastructure investment in an underserved community.

- ❖ Built an inclusive, high-performance organizational culture: implemented equitable salary scales, created staff development pathways, diversified the board, and skillfully navigated a staff unionization process while preserving mission alignment.

Strategy Consultant | **Independent Consulting** | New York, NY | 2015

Provided high-impact research and policy consulting for the New York Foundation, shaping philanthropic strategy at the intersection of housing, economic equity, and immigrant services.

Director of Policy & Advocacy | **United Neighborhood Houses** | New York, NY | 2012 – 2014

Led citywide policy and advocacy strategy on behalf of NYC's 38 settlement houses, shaping legislative outcomes affecting 500,000 vulnerable New Yorkers across housing, economic development, and human services.

- ❖ Co-led the landmark Campaign for Children, achieving the restoration of \$150M in cuts to child care and afterschool funding and establishing universal pre-K in New York City, laying the foundation that evolved into current citywide child care programs supported by Governor Hochul and Mayor Mamdani.
- ❖ Spearheaded the Blueprint for Neighborhoods, a comprehensive policy agenda presented to mayoral candidates in the 2013 election, demonstrating the capacity to influence government at the highest levels.
- ❖ Strengthened UNH's legislative footprint at both city and state levels through coalition mobilization and strategic stakeholder engagement.

Research, Fundraising & Policy Consultant | **Independent Consulting** | New York, NY | 2009 – 2012

Advised nonprofits on organizational development, fundraising strategy, and policy advocacy. Clients included ACDI-VOCA, Adhikaar, Chhaya CDC, and the NY Immigration Coalition.

Executive Director | **South Asian Youth Action (SAYA!)** | Queens, NY | 2001 – 2009

Built the first and largest South Asian and Indo-Caribbean youth organization in the United States from the ground up, expanding the budget fivefold and growing annual impact to 600+ youth.

- ❖ Built one of the largest individual donor programs for a South Asian American community, demonstrating the ability to mobilize capital from underserved populations and establish sustainable fundraising infrastructure at scale.
- ❖ Established SAYA! as a national policy leader in youth development, education equity, and immigrant civic integration.
- ❖ Created a diversified, sustainable funding model spanning government, philanthropy, and individual donors; pioneered new philanthropic pathways for South Asian American donors with lasting sector-wide influence.

Program Manager | **International Youth Foundation** | Baltimore, MD | 1996 – 2001

Envisioned and created YouthActionNet, identifying an unmet need and mobilizing resources to support youth social entrepreneurs globally—scaling the initiative into one of IYF's flagship programs, demonstrating the ability to build transformational models at an international scale.

- ❖ Managed YouthNet International, scaling impact and sustainability across 160 youth development organizations worldwide through best practice development and cross-sector learning exchanges.

CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

- ❖ Testified before the U.S. House Committee on Financial Services: “Modern-Day Redlining: The Burden of Underbanked and Excluded Communities” — 2020
- ❖ Testified before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties: “Discrimination and the Civil Rights of the Muslim, Arab, and South Asian American Communities” — March 1, 2022

EDUCATION & EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TRAINING

- ❖ **Yale School of Management** – Executive Education: Women on Boards

- ❖ **Harvard Business School** – Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management
- ❖ **Columbia Business School** – Executive Management Certificate
- ❖ **Fordham University** – M.A., International Political Economy & Development
- ❖ **Manhattanville College** – B.A., Political Science | Ed Rosa Scholar · President's Leadership Award

BOARD & CIVIC LEADERSHIP

Executive Board Member & Vice President NY Immigration Coalition	2001 – Present
Board Member Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development	2022 – Present
Board Member ReStored Homes Housing Development Fund Corporation	2022 – Present
Community Advisory Council Webster Bank	2022 – Present
Fund Advisor on Product Redesign Nonprofit Finance Fund	2022
Chair, Board of Directors National CAPACD, Washington, DC	2007 – 2015
Founding Board Member Immigrant Action (C4), New York, NY	2010 – 2018

PUBLIC SECTOR SERVICE

Transition Committee Member Mayor Zohran Mamdani's Housing Committee	2026
Commissioner NYC Civic Engagement Commission (Mayoral Appointee)	2019 – 2023
Transition Committee Member President Joe Biden's Committee on Housing	2020
Environmental Advisor NYC Congestion Pricing Program	2022 – 2023
Commissioner NYC Charter Revision Commission (Mayoral Appointee)	2018
Co-Chair Economic Development Committee, Queens Borough President	2020 – 2021

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Robin Hood Foundation Power Fund Recipient	2022
NYS City & State: 100 Most Influential Asians in New York	2021 – 2025
NYS City & State: 100 Most Influential Leaders from Queens	2021 – 2025
NYS City & State: 100 Most Influential New Yorkers	2021
Museum of the City of New York – Faith & Activism Exhibit	2023

PRESS & MEDIA PRESENCE

*Nationally recognized media voice on housing equity, economic justice, and underserved communities. 10+ appearances in the New York Times; featured on NPR/WBUR, NBC News, PBS/Thirteen, Gothamist, WSJ, CNN, CBS, ITV, and more. Delivered the introduction at Governor Hochul's launch of New York's first-in-the-nation \$539M Homeowner Assistance Fund. **Full press library:** annettaseecharran.com*