

Taneshia Nash Laird is a change agent and a community developer who centers cultural equity and narrative change in her work. She is the President and CEO of Newark Symphony Hall, a historic performing arts center located within the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Newark, NJ's largest city. As the nonprofit organization's new leader she is expanding programming to respond to community needs. Upon her appointment she announced plans to restore the 1925 opened concert hall, leveraging the property's status on the National Register of Historic Places for federal historic tax credits and location in a Designated Qualified Opportunity Zone and NJ Urban Enterprise Zone for additional investment. The restoration process will create 500 construction jobs and opportunities for 50 small businesses.

Prior to Newark Symphony Hall Taneshia served as Executive Director of the Arts Council of Princeton, notably as the first person of color in this role. Taneshia has also served as Director of Economic Development & Acting Director of Housing Production for the City of Trenton (NJ), Regional Director of the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce, and was the Executive Director of the Trenton Downtown Association, where she initiated Destination Trenton, an award-winning arts and tourism program.

As an entrepreneur Taneshia is the founder of Legacy Business Advisors, a consultancy serving social entrepreneurs, nonprofits, and government agencies. Among her projects is the Dunbar Center, a \$25 million dialysis center anchored medical mall that will add 175 permanent STEM jobs to Newark. She previously co-founded Legendary Eats in the Staples Center in Los Angeles with NBA legend James Worthy. With her late husband Roland, Taneshia also co-founded MIST Harlem, a popular entertainment center in New York City focused on the arts and entertainment of the African and LatinX diaspora. Together Taneshia and Roland also co-authored the critically acclaimed book *Still I Rise: A Graphic History of African Americans*.

A passionate advocate for the arts and heritage, Taneshia was a special government employee in the Obama Administration as a grants panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts. She is currently an adjunct professor of entertainment and arts management at Drexel University and a Senior Fellow with the Environmental Leadership Program in Washington, DC. Her nonprofit board service includes Artpride NJ where she co-chairs the equity, diversity and inclusion committee. In the summer of 2019 Taneshia was elected the president of the board of Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation.