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## **MassDevelopment elects Thomas TDI fellow**

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Misha Thomas

Taunton, MA MassDevelopment has hired a new Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) fellow, Misha Thomas, who will work full-time in the Taunton TDI district for the next two years. Thomas joins an existing cohort of TDI fellows who currently work in TDI districts in Attleboro, Barnstable (Hyannis), Fall River, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Revere, Springfield, and Worcester.

Thomas is a committed social entrepreneur dedicated to nurturing sustainable communities.

As the former director of business development at CommonWealth Kitchen, she significantly bolstered opportunities for small BIPOC food entrepreneurs, helping generate over \$200,000 in total sales revenue in her initial year. During this time, Thomas spearheaded the introduction of CWK's Yellow Pea Field Fritter to seven Boston-area colleges while leading the implementation of the Kendal Foundation Food Vision Grant. Prior, Thomas led the charge in reopening Roxbury's Haley House Bakery Cafe, guiding the team during the pandemic. Taking creative initiative, Thomas curated a Black-Owned beer garden and organized an Indigenous non-Thanksgiving, alongside spearheading Roxbury's first Pride Concert. Thomas is currently pursuing an MBA in sustainability and international business at Northeastern University.

"Misha Thomas will serve as MassDevelopment's point-person for Taunton, providing expertise and collaborative leadership to help local stakeholders implement their vision for economic growth in the city's Whittenton neighborhood," said MassDevelopment president and CEO Dan Rivera. "Misha's prior experience advancing business growth and inclusive community development positions her for success in this new role."

"Revitalizing our Whittenton neighborhood was a priority for our Team as we first came into office," said Taunton mayor Shaunna O'Connell. "MassDevelopment's TDI program is instrumental in helping us to achieve that goal. Thanks to the TDI program, we are seeing an impressive transformation in Whittenton. As we continue our revitalization of this area, the addition of Misha Thomas as our TDI fellow brings a new wave of enthusiasm and expertise."

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