

MDC Announces Lakeisha Hood Moise as New President and CEO

Hood Moise will be the first woman to lead MDC in its 57-year history

DURHAM, NC, UNITED STATES, May 22, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [MDC](#) is proud to announce the appointment of Lakeisha Hood Moise as its next President and CEO. A seasoned cross-sector leader with over 15 years of experience in government, nonprofit, and education sectors, Hood Moise will be the first woman to lead MDC in its 57-year history. She succeeds John Simpkins, who has served as President and CEO since 2020.

"Lakeisha Hood Moise is a strategic and values-driven leader who brings the operational expertise, systems thinking, and Southern rootedness we need to move MDC into its next chapter," said Kweku Forstall, Chair of the MDC Board of Directors. "Her work at the intersection of policy, community, and equity is aligned with MDC's mission of advancing economic mobility in the South."

A child of the South, Hood Moise was raised in Georgia, earned degrees from Alabama and North Carolina institutions, and currently resides in Florida. She most recently served as State Director for Florida and the U.S. Virgin Islands at USDA Rural Development, where she managed over \$3 billion in rural investments across housing, infrastructure, and economic development.

"Throughout my career, I've sought to build bridges between policy and practice—ensuring that systems and institutions truly serve communities," said Hood Moise. "I am honored and energized to lead this organization at such a critical moment for the South."



Lakeisha Hood Moise, new President and CEO of MDC

John Simpkins, outgoing President and CEO, shared, "Lakeisha is a bold, thoughtful leader who is made for this moment. Her vision and grounding in the South make her the ideal person to carry MDC's work forward as it deepens its presence across the region."

Partner organizations also expressed excitement. "Lakeisha's experience managing large-scale initiatives and building cross-sector coalitions will be a major asset to the region," said Darrin Goss, Sr., President & CEO, Coastal Community Foundation of South Carolina. "We look forward to continuing our collaboration with MDC under her leadership." Bernie Mazyck, President & CEO, SC Association for Community Economic Development shared "I'm eager to welcome Lakeisha Hood Moise into her new role as she leads MDC into its next chapter and look forward to the impact we can make together to expand opportunity in South Carolina and beyond."

Lakeisha will begin her tenure in May 2025, overlapping with a brief transition period during which she and Simpkins will co-lead key engagements, including events tied to the release of MDC's 2025 [State of the South report](#).

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