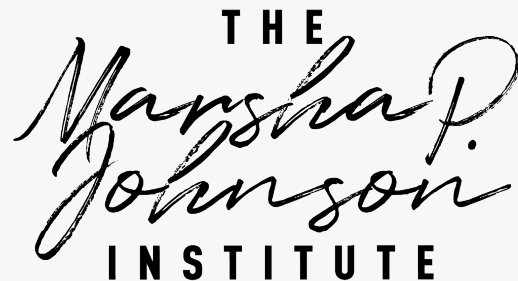


Award-Winning Transgender Advocate, Chastity Bowick, Named 2026-2027 Obama Foundation Leader

Marsha P. Johnson Institute executive director brings a career of community care, advocacy and Black trans leadership to the Obama Foundation.

COLUMBUS, OH, UNITED STATES, September 23, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Chastity Bowick, executive director of the [Marsha P. Johnson Institute](#) (MPJI), has been selected as a 2026-2027 Obama Foundation Leader. This makes her the first openly transgender woman selected for the program. Bowick sees the recognition as an opportunity for growth the community and to open the door for herself and others.



"When I was 18 or 19, I looked around at the spaces I wanted to be in and I didn't see people like me. I couldn't see myself there," Bowick said. "That's why visibility matters to me. It isn't about being seen for the sake of being seen. I want the young trans women coming behind me to see what is possible and then go further than I ever have. If the bar stops with me, then I haven't done my job."

Bowick's selection recognizes a career rooted in direct service, advocacy and organizational leadership. Born and raised in Rochester, New York, Bowick moved to Boston at 18 and went on to work across transgender health, emergency relief, housing and advocacy. She later spent seven years leading the [Transgender Emergency Fund of Massachusetts](#) and helped open the first transitional home for transgender communities in New England, an accomplishment she considers among the proudest of her career.

Today, Bowick leads MPJI, a national organization dedicated to protecting and defending the human rights of BLACK transgender people through organizing, advocacy, intentional community, transformative leadership development and collective power.

“

Look at the work, the commitment and the impact. I'm proud to enter this program as a Black transgender woman, and I'm proud of everything that brought me here. But... my work should speak for itself.”

Chastity Bowick

Bowick is hopeful that her time as an Obama Foundation Leader will give her access to resources that will broaden her leadership skills by learning from other leaders across different communities and build meaningful relationships that can strengthen the work she leads at MPJI.

“As a leader, I never stop learning,” Bowick said. “I'm looking forward to building meaningful relationships, sharing resources and learning from people whose work may look different from ours but still has points of connection. I want to take what I learn and use those relationships to expand MPJI's reach, strengthen our work and create more opportunities for our community.”

Bowick's selection comes at a consequential moment for transgender communities and for Black trans-led organizations working to meet growing community needs. She hopes the recognition will help bring Black transgender leadership into spaces and conversations where it has historically been overlooked, while expanding MPJI's relationships beyond LGBTQ+ communities.

“Our leadership should be valued just like anyone else's,” Bowick said. “Look at the work, the commitment and the impact. I'm proud to enter this program as a Black transgender woman, and I'm proud of everything that brought me here. But ultimately, my work should speak for itself.”

About Chastity Bowick

Chastity Bowick is an award-winning activist, civil rights leader, and Transgender health advocate who has dedicated her career to empowering Transgender and gender-nonconforming communities. She led the Transgender Emergency Fund of Massachusetts for seven years, opening New England's first trans transitional home, and now heads Chastity's Consulting & Talent Group, LLC. In 2026, she became Executive Director of the Marsha P. Johnson Institute, continuing her mission to advance equity, safety, and opportunity for trans people. Her leadership has earned her numerous honors recognizing her impact on social justice and community care.

About the Marsha P. Johnson Institute

The Marsha P. Johnson Institute (MPJI) protects and defends the human rights of BLACK Transgender people. Founded in response to the violence faced by BLACK trans women and their exclusion from broader movements for social justice, MPJI works to build a future where BLACK Transgender people can live prosperous, abundant, safe, and self-actualized lives. Through organizing, advocacy, intentional community, transformative leadership development, direct support, and collective power-building, MPJI works to eradicate the systemic, community, and physical violence that prevents BLACK TRANS people from actualizing freedom, joy, and

safety. Learn more at marshap.org.

About the Program

Now in its fourth year, The Obama Foundation Leaders USA Program is guided by the leadership values of President and Mrs. Obama. The program draws on the Foundation's Hope to Action curriculum to support Leaders in embracing diverse perspectives, harnessing collective power, and driving tangible progress toward a more just and sustainable world. The Leaders USA Program has a particular focus on strengthening democratic culture, and the 50 Leaders come from 29 states and territories and work across a broad range of focus areas, including democracy and civic engagement, public safety, artificial intelligence, public health, rural and economic opportunity, and arts and culture.

The Obama Foundation Leaders program is designed to inspire, empower, and connect emerging leaders from Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, and the United States to change their respective communities and the world. To learn more, visit obama.org/leaders.

Catalina Silva

Humanity Communications Collective

+1 571-488-5020

catalina@humanitycom.com

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/944572040>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.