

Karen A. Lewis

Biography

Karen A. Lewis currently serves as Executive Director of Avenue of the Arts, Inc. (AAI) (AAI is an independent non-profit organization created to coordinate and support cultural and related development along North and South “Broad Street in Philadelphia.) As Executive Director, Ms. Lewis is the chief executive officer with responsibility for strategic planning initiatives and relationship building among funders: public, private foundations and corporations. She is responsible for cultivating an economic development strategy that strengthens the Avenue of the Arts, in addition to being the point person that builds support from the public sector, the media and the business community. Ms Lewis develops collaborative marketing programs designed to bring people to the Avenue both day and night and build widespread awareness of the Avenue’s diverse facilities and attractions. AAI is a catalyst for building collaborations with those in key relationships around issues of mutual concern such as transportation, parking, safety and beautification. Ms. Lewis helps maintain and enhance the existing streetscape plan for the Avenue. She serves as the point person for day-to-day activities, oversees all organizational operations including budgets, financial planning, program development, marketing and public relations, development, implementation and management of all programs and procedures of AAI. Ms. Lewis serves as the primary spokesperson for the organization.

Karen Lewis served as Senior Director of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance (GPCA). Ms. Lewis was responsible for managing two departments, Policy/Research and Marketing, overseeing the organization’s relationship with the Advertising Agency, the Research Company and the Public Relations Agency. In this capacity, Ms. Lewis also supported the organization’s external affairs efforts working with and developing relationships among various elected officials, business and community leaders. As Senior Director, Ms. Lewis worked closely with the Executive Director on strategic planning, board development/communication and board committees. She also represented the organization at various industry meetings, conferences and events.

Previously, Ms. Lewis held the position of Vice President of the Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation (GPTMC), where she developed and managed the organization’s Tourism Marketing Grant program. In addition, she managed the Hospitality Development Grant program, government relations, research and special marketing/advertising projects specifically related to cultural and multicultural tourism.

Under former Mayor Rendell, Ms. Lewis held the position of Deputy City Representative. Among her many responsibilities for the City were special events planning and implementation. She also served as Executive Director of the annual Welcome America celebration, overseeing a two-week festival with a \$2.5 million dollar budget.

Ms. Lewis currently serves on the boards of the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, Multicultural Affairs Congress (MAC) (former Vice Chair) and the Knight Foundation Community Advisory Committee. She also serves on the boards of Sunoco Welcome America, Philadelphia Music Alliance and The Advisory Board of the Philadelphia Dance Initiative. She previously served as Vice Chair of the School District of Philadelphia’s Career to School Program. Ms. Lewis also served on Governor Ridge’s Tourism Task Force, helping to develop a collaborative partnership between the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Province of Quebec. Ms. Lewis served on Mayor Rendell’s Arts & Cultural Advisory Committee, the Republican National Convention organizing committee and the Presidential Summit for America’s Future. Ms. Lewis also represented Philadelphia in South America (Chile) at an international conference on urban renewal and revitalization in May 2002. The Philadelphia Tribune recently named her one of Philadelphia’s most influential African American. Ms. Lewis recently served on Governor Ed Rendell’s Inaugural Committee.