She Is: A Catalyst for Economic Development Through Empowerment and Mentorship in Hudson County
March 2026

(Picture Top to Bottom): Shakimiah Garretson, Assistant Director, Latoya Roberts, Senior Mentor, Tamara Wells, Program Liaison, Qaadia Roberts, Founder & Executive Director

Founded in 2016 by Qaadia Roberts, She Is, a Jersey City–based nonprofit, serves young women and girls ages 6 to 18. Through mentorship, leadership development, and the creation of safe spaces, She Is empowers girls to own their voices and step boldly into their futures — building confidence and capacity that strengthens Hudson County's long-term economic vitality.

In Hudson County, economic growth depends on both strong business attraction and the cultivation of local talent. She Is plays an essential role in this ecosystem by empowering girls through mentorship, leadership development, and community engagement that directly strengthens access to opportunity and workforce readiness.

"The nonprofit sector is a cornerstone of Hudson County's economic strength," says Hudson County Executive Craig Guy. "Organizations like She Is ensure that young people are engaged early, developing the skills, confidence, and networks they need to participate in — and contribute to — a thriving, competitive economy. When we invest in our youth, we invest directly in Hudson County's future workforce and leadership."

Qaadia Roberts was honored at the 2026 Black History Month Celebration with the Hudson County Positive Impact Award, recognizing a decade of dedicated service in local and state government and her founding of She Is. Nominated by Assemblyman Jerry Walker (D-31) and former County Commissioner, Roberts was recognized by Hudson County Executive Craig Guy for her unwavering commitment to uplifting women and strengthening communities through advocacy, mentorship, and service-driven leadership.

"Instilling confidence and providing opportunities to build connections are necessary building blocks," says Qaadia Roberts, Executive Director of She Is. "When women are supported to identify their strengths and build networks, they bring that confidence into the workforce, into entrepreneurship, and into leadership roles that elevate our entire community."

She Is operates structured mentorship programs that aim to identify and cultivate leadership qualities by pairing girls with seasoned professionals across industries. These relationships help participants develop professional skills while building the social capital crucial for career mobility in today's competitive job market.

Empowered Young Women

"Our mentorship circles don't just open doors — they create new ones," explains Shakimah Garretson, Assistant Director at She Is. "Participants gain access to internships, job opportunities, and resources that might otherwise be out of reach. That's how individual empowerment translates into economic impact."

From an economic development perspective, these outcomes are measurable: stronger talent pipelines, higher workforce participation rates, and more women starting businesses or advancing into leadership positions. Moreover, She Is fosters a culture of giving back — many program graduates become mentors themselves, reinforcing a virtuous cycle of growth and community investment.

"As She Is marks its 10th anniversary, we celebrate a decade of measurable impact in building confidence, leadership, and opportunity for young women across Hudson County," says Michelle Richardson, Executive Director of the Hudson County Economic Development Corporation. "Organizations like She Is demonstrate that sustainable economic growth begins with investing in people — ensuring the next generation is prepared to step into leadership and participate fully in a dynamic and evolving economy."

As Hudson County continues to pursue inclusive and sustainable economic development, She Is remains an indispensable partner in building a thriving, equitable local economy.

Explore:
She Is Inc.
Hudson County
Hudson County Economic Development Corporation
LegendzOnly Photography