

# State of Small Business Symposium

**2026**  
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Cleveland, OH



**Renata B. Kowalczyk**  
CEO  
Wilmington Alliance

Renata B. Kowalczyk is the chief executive officer of the Wilmington Alliance, with the mission of bringing people together to drive innovative solutions, leverage resources and promote opportunities to empower the city's residents and businesses. In that capacity she is responsible for leading the strategy, design and execution of all programming, philanthropic investments, creation of strategic partnerships, management of three physical properties, support functions, expense- and revenue management of the organization, including all aspects of building lean but high performing team, governance, two Boards, consultants, and external partnerships, in support of the economic mobility in Wilmington, through entrepreneur & small business support, neighborhood revitalization, workforce development, data and social impact measurement, and an ongoing advocacy. In January 2024, Renata was selected for a 3-year term to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System's Community Advisory Council.

Prior to becoming a non-profit leader, Renata's career included executive leadership roles in several financial institutions, including JPMorgan Chase, Pershing LLC (a subsidiary of Bank of New York Mellon), and Merrill Lynch. She also worked as a business consultant for startups and small businesses, as an angel investor for women-owned businesses, and in 2021 she joined RareBreed Ventures VC Fund as an LP. Renata has an M.B.A. from Columbia University, an M.S. in nonprofit leadership from the University of Pennsylvania, and a bachelor's degree in economics from Baruch College – City University of New York.

Renata is a native of Poland, who arrived in United States two days after the fall of the Berlin Wall, as a 22-year old student, speaking three sentences in English and having \$20 in her pocket. She is passionate about building ecosystems that are impact driven.

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