



Connected Communities Foundation Launches as a Nonprofit to Expand Supportive Services to Affordable Housing Residents

WinnCompanies Department transforms into Nonprofit to Serve Residents of Multifamily Communities

BOSTON (February 28, 2024) – [WinnCompanies](#), an award-winning national owner, developer, and manager of high-impact apartment communities, today announced the launch of the [Connected Communities Foundation \(CCF\)](#), a nonprofit organization dedicated to the creation and growth of community-based programs, services and public policies that support and track better outcomes and opportunities for affordable housing residents across the country.

Connected Communities has grown to become one of the nation’s largest providers of housing-based supportive services since WinnCompanies created it in 2017 as an internal department offering more robust and relevant resident services for Winn-owned and managed properties. Over the last five years, its team has doubled in size to serve more than 230 communities nationwide in 18 states and the District of Columbia, partnering with more than 3,000 service providers to connect residents with programs, services and resources that deliver measurable, positive change in their quality of life.



Having received Internal Revenue Service approval to become a nonprofit private operating foundation, CCF now plans to expand its work beyond multifamily communities owned by WinnCompanies or managed by WinnResidential, and to pursue philanthropic support from foundations and tax-exempt donations from private, public, corporate, and individual supporters vested in the range of outcomes created by its work.

“Our primary goal in creating Connected Communities seven years ago was to ensure we were providing meaningful support in dealing with social, educational, health and economic challenges for our residents – in addition to providing quality homes to live in. Its work is more important today than ever and we believe it will be even more successful as a foundation dedicated to developing and implementing collaborative strategies that change the lives of residents for the better,” said WinnCompanies CEO **Gilbert Winn**.“

WinnCompanies Senior Vice President, **Trevor Samios**, who has pioneered and refined the Connected Communities platform since its inception, will chair the CCF Board of Directors, while WinnResidential Vice President **Mai Dang** will serve as the new foundation’s President and oversee CCF’s day-to-day operations.

“Affordable housing offers an incredible platform to support and realize the aspirations and goals of individuals and families working toward opportunity in the United States. This new vehicle for measurable,



social impact will empower us to both deepen and expand our work nationally; scale proven programs and support networks with our partners; and increase our capacity to help families navigate through the barriers they face," **Samios** said. "We could not have reached this milestone without the passion and hard work of Connected Communities' 129 team members, our partners, and their unwavering belief in people."

Connected Communities provides the backbone for collective impact in each multifamily community it supports. It develops structured, shared goals with networks of local community partners and resident leaders; implements collaborative strategies, programs and mutually reinforcing supports; and measures the outcomes of ongoing work in six categories: Community Engagement, Economic Mobility, Education, Employment, Health, and Housing Stability.

Central to the approach is that team members, community leaders and partners see and understand the impact of the work and allow for continuous learning and improvement. Key examples include:

- **Housing Stability:** Launched in 2019, Connected Communities supported WinnCompanies' [Housing Stability Program](#), working with hundreds of clients and partners nationally to implement upstream eviction prevention tactics, pursue over \$64 million in pandemic Emergency Rental Assistance and prevent tens of thousands of evictions for families facing financial hardship.
- **Economic Mobility Outcome:** Since 2019, Connected Communities has supported nearly 400 families to enroll in the HUD Family Self Sufficiency program, providing a mechanism to build assets and improve financial wellness through one-on-one financial coaching paired with an innovative wealth-building account. Participants have accrued over \$891,000 in savings through the program. In 2024, Connected Communities will expand this effort to 30 communities across multiple states, supporting 300 new families with a powerful economic mobility program. Today, 84% of families across Connected Communities' supported portfolio self-identify as financially secure.
- **Health Outcome:** Working with hospital systems, health centers and community partners across the country to support individuals and families with stable healthcare, Connected Communities has ensured that 97% of families at properties supported by Connected Communities have health insurance and 95% of families regularly utilize primary care.

"CCF equips us with a powerful tool to increase our impact in the communities we serve," **Dang** said. "With our dedicated team of coordinators across the country, working closely with families and partners each day, we're able to develop services and interventions to address the distinct needs of families. By expanding our services and programs that bring about positive change, we're committed to making a meaningful difference in the lives of the residents and communities we support."

CCF's mission will be guided by a six-member founding board of directors comprised of banking, health, housing, philanthropic and community development leaders:

- **Dr. Megan Sandel**, a nationally recognized expert on housing and child health, who is the Founder and Director of Boston Medical Center's (BMC) Housing Initiative, BMC's Grow Clinic for Children, professor of pediatrics at the Chobanian and Avedisian School of Medicine as well as a professor of environmental health at the Boston University School of Public Health.
- **Markita Morris-Louis, ESQ**, Chief Executive Officer of Compass Working Capital, a national nonprofit engaging in policy advocacy, direct service, and capacity building to end asset poverty for families with low-incomes and to narrow the racial and gender wealth gaps.

- **Maria Barry**, National Executive for Community Development Banking at Bank of America, which helps support the creation of affordable and mixed-income housing. Ms. Barry and her team develop innovative financing solutions to fund projects that improve housing, education, and quality of life while creating local jobs.
- **Ted Chandler**, Senior Managing Director of Strategic Initiatives for the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust, who helps oversee the company's operations and community investment initiatives in key markets across the country.
- **Jennifer Aronson**, Deputy Vice President of the Boston Foundation, who oversees the Foundation's Amplifying Community Leadership work focused on helping communities by supporting movement leaders, safety net organizations and a healthy nonprofit infrastructure.
- **Absalom Jordan**, Executive Director of the Southern Hills Tenant Task Force, community activist, former D.C. Department of Employment Services leader, Air Force veteran and a longtime resident of the Southern Hills Apartments community in Washington, D.C.

With WinnCompanies providing continued support, Samios, Dang and the CCF Board of Directors plan to pursue partnership opportunities designed to grow their proven social impact venture and realize new pathways to opportunities for multifamily communities nationwide.

Thanks to the efforts of Connected Communities, WinnCompanies in 2020 became the first for-profit multifamily company to earn the CORES certification (Certified Organization for Resident Engagement and Services) from the Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future (SAHF), a national not-for-profit affordable housing collaborative. The certification validated the company's strong commitment to best practices in delivering outcome-focused resident services.

About WinnCompanies

WinnCompanies is an award-winning owner, developer and manager of high-impact, quality apartment homes, supported by 4,000 team members in 24 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The company is known as a leading manager of multifamily apartment communities, operating the nation's largest portfolio of affordable housing with a groundbreaking resident services platform. Its community development work focuses on creating and revitalizing mixed-income, workforce and affordable properties through environmentally sustainable new construction and pioneering adaptive reuse techniques. The company has also been a top manager of privatized housing for members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families since 2001. Founded in Boston in 1971, WinnCompanies is a family-owned, private company. Learn more at www.winncompanies.com.

About the Connected Communities Foundation

The Connected Communities Foundation (CCF) is a private, nonprofit foundation that helps owners of multifamily properties develop and implement collaborative strategies that have measurable, positive effects on the lives of residents of low-income, affordable, and mixed-income housing. In partnership with more than 3,000 service providers nationwide, CCF delivers a collective impact approach to community development, focusing on collaborative strategies that drive measurable outcomes for individuals and families in six categories: community engagement, economic mobility, education, employment, health, and housing. Potential partners should contact Trevor Samios (tsamios@winnco.com) or Mai Dang (mdang@winnco.com) for more information.

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