



## **Connected Communities Foundation Names Paula Popeo to Lead Fundraising and Philanthropy**

### ***Affordable Housing Non-Profit Appoints Six to Leadership Positions***

**BOSTON (May 14, 2024)** – The Connected Communities Foundation (CCF), a non-profit dedicated to advancing community-based programs for affordable housing residents, today announced a series of leadership appointments, including an experienced executive to lead the Foundation’s fundraising and philanthropic efforts.

Paula Popeo is CCF’s first executive-level hire and brings more than 25 years of nonprofit fundraising experience, having served as an Assistant Vice Chancellor at the University of Massachusetts Boston, the Development Director for Bristol Community College and, most recently, Principal Gift Officer at Suffolk University.

In addition to Popeo’s appointment, CCF named five other individuals to operational and regional leadership roles designed to establish the founding infrastructure for the newly created organization, which is already one of the nation’s largest providers of housing-based supportive services.

“One of CCF’s core values is our belief in people, from the families we support to our site-based team members and community partners. We are so pleased that our mission attracted a respected professional like Paula,” said **CCF President Mai Dang**. “This investment in operational and regional leadership will allow us to further grow our team infrastructure and support for communities across the country.”

Popeo’s priority will be to pursue philanthropic support for CCF’s mission from foundations, as well as tax-deductible donations from private, public, corporate, and individual supporters vested in the range of outcomes created by the organization’s work.

“I am excited and honored to join the Connected Communities Foundation team. I look forward to garnering support for this new and innovative venture and am particularly motivated to support Connected Communities’ commitment to providing enhanced services to the residents it serves,” Popeo said.

Connected Communities was first created in 2017 as an internal department of WinnCompanies, an award-winning national owner, developer, and manager of high-impact apartment communities, with a mission of offering more robust and relevant resident services for Winn-owned and managed properties. It received Internal Revenue Service approval to become a private, nonprofit operating foundation earlier this year.

CCF partners with multifamily housing owners and service providers across the county to connect affordable housing residents to community-based programs, services and public policies that deliver improved opportunities for a stronger quality of life. CCF works with more than 3,000 community-based organizations to serve residents in more than 230 apartment communities nationwide in 14 states and the District of Columbia.

In conjunction with Popeo's appointment, CCF also announced:

- The promotion of **Sarah Perks** to Head of Operations Support from her prior role as Senior Operations Manager. Perks has been with Connected Communities for seven years and previously served in resident services for WinnResidential, the property management arm of WinnCompanies. In her role as Head of Operations Support, Perks leads regional operations across the country for Connected Communities. She holds a bachelor's degree in environmental studies and sociology from Tulane University and a master's degree from Boston University School of Social Work.
- The appointment of **Mahesh Murthy** as the new Head of Impact Analytics, where he will develop reporting and insights that will provide impact evaluation and quality assurance for all services offered by Connected Communities. He has more than 20 years of experience as a data architecture and analytics professional across numerous fields, including healthcare and retail. Murthy holds a master's degree in information systems from the University of Pittsburgh and an MBA from Carnegie Mellon University's Tepper School of Business.
- The promotion of **Toviyah Williams** to Impact Analytics Manager from her prior role as Operations Analyst. As Impact Analytics Manager, Williams is responsible for quality assurance, working closely with Team Leads and community coordinators, to provide system training and support. She is also responsible for leading reporting and quality assurance efforts to inform overall departmental design and performance. Her prior positions include roles at Apple, Inc., The Community Builders, and The Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio.
- The appointment of **Aaron Walker** as Team Lead for multifamily clients in California and Colorado. A human service professional with experience as a case manager and program director, he most recently served as a program manager with PATH, one of the largest nonprofit developers and social services providers in California. Walker holds a bachelor's degree in business management from the University of Phoenix and a master's degree in educational counseling from the University of La Verne.
- The appointment of **Ivy Chandler** as Team Lead for the Midwest region, including multifamily clients in Ohio, Illinois and Michigan. Chandler brings a wealth of social work experience to the role, including work as a program manager in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) leading a team of case managers who assessed residents' needs, created personalized treatment plans, and closely monitored progress. She also worked at Jonathan Rose Companies, where she served as a program manager on the Social Impact Team. Chandler holds both a bachelor's degree and a master's in social work from the University of Akron.

Connected Communities staff provides the backbone for collective impact in each multifamily community CCF supports. CCF 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.

“The addition of Paula, Mahesh, Ivy and Aaron, and the well-deserved elevation of Sarah and Toviya, add so much to the capacity and promise of this strong team,” said **Trevor Samios, Board Chair of CCF**. “CCF was built on the foundation and potential of collective impact, and the expertise and experience these team members will lend to that mission is extremely exciting.”

### **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 and affordable housing. As one of the nation’s largest providers of housing-based supportive services, 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. Learn more at [connectedcommunitiesfoundation.org](http://connectedcommunitiesfoundation.org).

### **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. 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](http://www.winncompanies.com).