



Enterprise Community Ptrs. launches Roundtable with Goldman Sachs to advance Black women developers

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New York, NY Enterprise Community Partners, with support from Goldman Sachs, launched a new Roundtable that will develop a shared policy platform to include recommendations to confront the challenges faced by Black women affordable housing developers.

The Roundtable will meet over the course of 2022 and will comprise six for-profit and nonprofit Black women developers: Ericka Keller, Brisa Builders; Dawanna Williams, Dabar Development Partners; Alexis McSween, Bottom Line Construction & Development; Nnenna Lynch, Xylem Projects; Bernell Grier, IMPACCT Brooklyn; and Yvonne Stennett, Community League of the Heights. Participants will ascertain and discuss the unique barriers that they encounter in developing affordable housing in the city, identify policy priorities to address those barriers, and collectively work to advance and support a shared policy platform.

The project is made possible through funding from Goldman Sachs as part of its One Million Black Women initiative, which pledges \$10 billion in direct investment capital and \$100 million in philanthropic support to address the disproportionate gender and racial biases that Black women face. The Roundtable is also a part of Enterprise's Equitable Path Forward, a \$3.5 billion nationwide initiative, which strives to dismantle the legacy of racism in housing by filling the capital gap created by decades of systemic racism; strengthening providers through advisory services and other nonfinancial support; and creating new career pathways to diversify leadership in real estate.

"We're grateful for Goldman Sachs' support, which allows us this important opportunity to elevate the voices of Black women within the development community," said Baaba Halm, vice president and New York market leader at Enterprise Community Partners. "The Roundtable is truly a special forum that we hope will lead to meaningful discovery and impact, and we so look forward to seeing the policy platform that emerges from this process. It's exciting knowing that we can't predict its contents in advance, because it will be so deeply informed by the individual and often unheard perspectives of our cohort."

"The COVID-19 pandemic magnified the disparity and inequities of opportunity and access that exist in this country, yet simultaneously provided a pathway to the value of new voices that can create a more inclusive reality in real estate development and other markets that have been traditionally exclusive," said Ericka Keller, chairperson/CEO of Brisa Builders. "Thank you to Goldman Sachs, Enterprise Community Partners, and their collaborators for acknowledging the importance of the influence of Black women in the real estate development industry."

“I am so encouraged by the launch of the new Roundtable. As part of an underrepresented group in the real estate development industry, it is heartening to know that a platform will be created by Goldman Sachs and Enterprise Community Partners to address the dearth of established Black women developers,” said Dawanna Williams, Founder and Managing Principal of Dabar Development Partners. “Since our company is always thinking about how to improve quality of life and strengthen communities, the policies generated from the Roundtable platform will also have a direct impact on the people we serve. In this way, the Roundtable is a win for all.”

“Historically, Black women have committed their entire lives to the ‘Holistic approach of Building Communities,’” said Alexis McSween, founder and CEO of Bottom Line Construction & Development. “Goldman Sachs’ One Million Black Women Initiative and Enterprise Community Partners’ recognition of the vital role female black developers play further establishes the value of our work.”

“I very much appreciate Enterprise’s leadership and Goldman Sachs’ support,” said Nnenna Lynch, founder and CEO of Xylem Projects. “I look forward to working with my fellow developers on this initiative.”

“Black women have long been leaders in affordable housing development; when our voices are elevated, there is even more we can do on behalf of the communities in which we live and work,” said Bernell Greer, executive director at IMPACCT Brooklyn. “I applaud Goldman Sachs and Enterprise for gathering this cohort of women, and I am honored to be a participant.”

“I am thankful to Enterprise for the opportunity to gather with other Black Women who every day drive to create strong, well-resourced communities,” said Yvonne Stennett, executive director at Community League of the Heights. “We all encounter hurdles and struggles that we most often face alone. We are in fact not alone: we have each other. I believe that through this convening we can affirm that, cement our support for each other while we work along with Enterprise to tackle the barriers and challenges we face in our work.”

The Roundtable’s emergent policy platform will allow city and state government officials to be better informed about the unique challenges faced by Black women developers. They can then consider these learnings when supporting policy and regulatory changes needed to increase the participation of minority developers within the affordable housing sector. The Roundtable will also enable Enterprise to shape its own policy priorities, financial products, and programmatic offerings that better serve the needs of Black women in developer roles.