

# Building Connection and Community through Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Camden's sharpened focus on DEI has ignited lasting impact on individual and organizational outcomes. Get a peek into how their DEI leadership, approach, and actions have earned them national recognition in the real estate industry.

## DEI at Camden: A Movement, not a Moment

Camden Property Trust, an S&P 500 Company, is one of the largest publicly-traded multifamily companies in the United States. Structured as a Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT), they own, operate, and develop properties containing over 58,000 apartment homes located in 15 major markets in the United States. In 2024 Camden celebrates 17 years being recognized by Fortune Magazine as one of the 100 Best Companies to Work For® in America. Headquartered in Houston, Texas, Camden's workforce totals approximately 1,600 employees nationwide.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are integral to Camden's past, present, and future. Since 2003, Camden has actively sponsored Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) with leadership at the network and local level. Board diversity became a priority in 2009, and today, Camden has one of the most racially and gender diverse boards in Commercial Real Estate. Recognizing the inevitable need for DEI as an industry focus, Camden was a founding member of the National Multifamily Housing Council's (NMHC) DEI Committee and an early contributor to the National Association of Real Estate Investment Trust's (Nareit) Dividends through DEI CEO Council.

Camden firmly believes that intentional DEI builds organizational capacity, and the path forward must ensure DEI is woven into their culture, talent, and business practices. Within two years of establishing internal DEI governance, Camden was recognized with Nareit's Gold Corporate DEI Award and Laurie Baker, their COO, was recognized with Nareit's Individual DEI Achievement Award.



Read on to see what sets them apart!

## DEI Intentionality

Camden's DEI Purpose and Guideposts frame their focused commitment and continuous improvement efforts:

“AT CAMDEN, WE RECOGNIZE THAT DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION ARE INTEGRAL TO WHO WE ARE AND HOW WE ACHIEVE. WE COMMIT TO FOSTERING AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE ALL ARE WELCOME AND ENCOURAGED TO SUCCEED.”

“WE KNOW WE ARE DOING WELL WHEN: DEI IS REFLECTED IN OUR BEHAVIORS AND OUR BRAND, WE EMPOWER PEOPLE AND LEVERAGE ANALYTICS TO ADVANCE EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND DIVERSITY AT ALL LEVELS, AND WE ARE RECOGNIZED FOR OUR COURAGE AND COMMITMENT IN DRIVING GROWTH, INNOVATION, AND SOCIAL IMPACT.”

In order to lead, execute, and sustain progress, Camden's DEI Governance includes 100% commitment from participating executives, a full-time DEI Director, a DEI Council working group, and CultureConnection - an internal peer network designed to champion DEI and one another. Both the DEI Council and CultureConnection are in their second cohort and critical success factors for stewarding DEI at Camden.

## Value Creation through Connection and Community

Culture is Camden's greatest asset in fulfilling their organizational “why” of improving the lives of team members, customers, and shareholders. Recognizing that a great work culture must encourage differences and continually evolve, the first several years of DEI intentionality have been focused on advancing its culture of inclusion and belonging.

CultureConnection was formally established in May 2022 to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion as part of the employee experience. It included 50 employees from varying roles, geographies, and backgrounds. Camden intentionally applied a broadened definition of diversity and an emphasis on inclusivity in developing this peer network to further understanding and respect *across* organizational levels, work locations, and cultural identity groups.



*Ric Campo, Camden's CEO, participates in Hispanic Heritage Month roundtable on Culture, Values, and Leadership*

For that reason, CultureConnection is sponsored by Camden’s Executive DEI Committee, led by their DEI Council, and open to anyone passionate about championing DEI and one another.



*Camden’s Mid-Atlantic Leadership came together for a Black Excellence outing and team experience in Washington, D.C.*

In 2024, DEI ‘Open House’ events sponsored by regional executives made a big impact in CultureConnection membership, which increased by 200%! Project teams were established to elevate local DEI champions into national lead roles and further embed the value of connection and community-building in each of Camden’s markets.

Through CultureConnection, participants have the opportunity to learn about differences, build new professional connections, and directly influence and lead how DEI is incorporated into the all-Camden employee experience. It is an employee benefit Camden is proud to offer all current and future team members.

Today, demand and utilization of DEI learning and community-building opportunities continue to grow. Camden celebrates over 45,000 visits to their “DEI Lives Here’ site where people can find employee-led online diversity awareness stories, micro-learning resources, and engaging competitions and activities. Camden also established a CultureConnection chat to unite national

DEI communications and celebrations. The digital communications reinforce live engagement opportunities, enabling employees everywhere to have a space to feel seen, heard, and valued.

## Closing

The greatest impact of DEI intentionality, connection, and community comes not in numbers but through every opportunity to share Camden stories and experiences with others. The commitment from executive leadership affirms that diversity, equity, and inclusion are key components of Camden's culture and the evolution of CultureConnection as a peer network brings that message to life.

While their focus on inclusive culture and employee experience generates individual and institutional value, Camden is also equally committed and actively involved in driving collective progress in the real estate talent pipeline and supplier landscape. Their purpose carries and clarifies all DEI efforts: to foster an environment where all are welcome and encouraged to succeed. Camden is unwavering in its commitment to building an inclusive future, one that represents the best of yesterday, the best of today, and the best of tomorrow!



*Camden team members embrace Neurodiversity Acceptance*