

“Authentic Engagement”

An Interview with **Lata N. Reddy**,
Vice President and Head of Corporate Social Responsibility, Prudential Financial, Inc.

EDITORS' NOTE *Lata Reddy is also the President of The Prudential Foundation. She originally joined Prudential in 1997 to manage the foundation's education grant-making. In 2002, she became Vice President of The Prudential Foundation and oversaw the development of the strategic direction of the foundation's grant-making policy and programs, and led the staff. She left Prudential in 2008 to run an independent consulting practice, advising philanthropic and nonprofit clients on strategy and program development. She returned to assume her current position in April 2012. Earlier in her career, Reddy worked for the U.S. Department of Education, where she was an attorney in the Office for Civil Rights in the New York regional office. She also was Director of Finance and Legal Services at the Council for Educational Development and Research. Reddy holds a B.A. degree in economics from the University of Michigan and a law degree from Emory University School of Law. She is admitted to the bar in New York State.*



Lata N. Reddy

COMPANY BRIEF *A financial services leader, Prudential Financial, Inc. (prudential.com), has operations in the United States, Asia, Europe, and Latin America, and is committed to helping individual and institutional customers grow and protect their wealth through a variety of products and services, including life insurance, annuities, retirement-related services, mutual funds, and investment management.*

How important is corporate philanthropy and social responsibility to the culture of Prudential?

Social responsibility and the concept of giving back have been part of Prudential's culture since the company's very beginning. Prudential was founded to provide life insurance for the working poor, filling a clear social need. Although Prudential has grown into a worldwide financial services firm, its commitment to social impact has remained strong. This sense of responsibility is a foundational value for the company and its employees around the world.

How broadly do you focus your CSR efforts, and do the areas you support align with Prudential's business strategy?

Our CSR strategy is tightly focused and in clear alignment with Prudential's business strategy. Prudential broadly seeks to help our customers achieve financial prosperity and peace of mind, while CSR's focus is to build a shared and lasting prosperity for the underserved. Our alignment is in the purpose we serve as we each focus on differing sets of constituents. Aligning with Prudential's business strategy creates opportunities for us to leverage Prudential's resources for greater social impact, while Prudential's businesses and employees value our contributions.

What sets Prudential's CSR program apart from others?

We think that our approach, our structure, and our “on-the-ground” experience differentiate our program.

What makes our approach to corporate social responsibility so unique is our focus on “authentic engagement” – genuine and long-term committed partnerships with our various stakeholders – married with the resources of a major global financial institution to solve problems where we have in-depth experience and knowledge.

We also house three very important resource groups under our overall CSR roof – philanthropy, impact investments, and employee engagement. Focusing these resources on a strategy that aligns with Prudential's business strengths enables us to apply our capital more effectively, creating greater leverage for social impact.

Prudential is also deeply rooted in the communities in which our employees live and work. Our presence in Newark, where our company was founded and still has its headquarters, exemplifies this. Our knowledge of the Newark community is honed by real experience. We are on the ground every day leveraging our resources and expertise in the redevelopment of the city.

Can you highlight some of the programs that Prudential is involved with?

Prudential puts its money to work across the U.S. and abroad. In 2013, the company contributed \$43 million in grants and contributions, committed \$100 million in impact investments, and provided 120,000 employee volunteer hours to support our communities. These resources support a broad range of organizations. For example, we support the National Council of La Raza's

Wealth-Building Policy Project, which seeks to strengthen Latino communities by preserving and increasing their wealth through research and advocacy.

Prudential also recently invested in an outdated industrial building in the heart of Newark that will not only modernize a functionally obsolete building but will bring innovative technology to the city, support new high-quality jobs, and improve the supply of fresh produce to an underserved market. In addition, the company made a long-term commitment to the Tohoku region of Japan that was devastated by the Tsunami that hit on March 11, 2011. Immediately following the disaster, Prudential committed \$6.1 million (¥622 million) to aid in relief, recovery, and rebuilding of the Tohoku area. Given Prudential's interests in Japan, Prudential will stay the course and help the region in recovery and long-term development.

How critical is it to have metrics in place to evaluate and measure the success of your programs?

Measuring progress is critical. We have metrics in place to guide our efforts, and we constantly look for new and more sophisticated methodologies to assess the impact of our work. Our planning horizon includes exploring the use of data analytics tools to delve deeper for better insights.

How do you communicate your corporate responsibility efforts to employees to make sure they are engaged in your programs?

Our senior leadership is passionate about corporate responsibility, and their commitment continues to be a critical factor in engaging employees. In his latest State of the Company address, our Chairman spoke with great enthusiasm about the company's community investments. The company also communicates frequently to employees about Prudential's CSR efforts through internal communications and events. We use various platforms to fully engage our employees in Prudential's CSR efforts and provide opportunities such as a paid volunteer day, dollars for doers, and matching gift programs to support their ability to give back.

Prudential has made a great impact and affected many lives through its philanthropic work. Do you take time as an organization to reflect and appreciate all that you have accomplished?

We believe very strongly in this work. While there is evidence of its impact, our work is never done. ●