



## **First Niagara Names Jeanneen Griffin to Lead Regional Commercial Real Estate Lending Team**

*28-year commercial real estate veteran will drive lending activities across Southern New England and Tri-State Regions*

NEW HAVEN CT. – May 20, 2013 – First Niagara Financial Group, Inc. (Nasdaq:FNFG) named Jeanneen V. Griffin to serve as First Vice President and Team Leader, Commercial Real Estate Lending for the bank’s New England and Tri-State Regions. Specifically, Griffin will manage a sizable commercial real estate loan portfolio and lead an experienced team of CRE lenders focused on developing business with middle market and institutional owners/developers throughout Connecticut, New York Metro, Westchester County and Northern New Jersey. Target transactions range from \$5 million to \$100 million for properties including multifamily, office, grocery-anchored and single credit tenant retail, and warehouse/distribution.

Griffin is a highly accomplished real estate lender with more than 28 years of experience in debt and equity financing in both middle market and institutional lending. She joins First Niagara from People’s United Bank where she served as a senior commercial lending officer, and consistently ranked as a market leading performer in new loan production. She also held commercial lending roles with GE Commercial Finance, Webster Bank, and CRIIMI MAE, Inc. Earlier in her career she held positions at Paul Revere Life Insurance Company, CIGNA Investments, Inc. and Barclays American Business Credit.

“We are fortunate to attract someone with the depth and breadth of experience that Jeanneen possesses,” said First Niagara Senior Vice President Commercial Real Estate Regional Manager Christophe Terlizzi. “With her extensive market knowledge, strong underwriting and loan structuring skills, and proven ability to acquire profitable new business, she is the perfect leader to drive our CRE growth objectives in the region.”

Griffin has been a member of the executive committee of the New York chapter of the Real Estate Lenders Association for three years, and currently serves as Membership Chair. She was a past president of the Real Estate Exchange (CT affiliate of CREW Network) and a board member of REFA in CT.

“I am excited to join First Niagara, and welcome the opportunity to work with such an accomplished team of lenders,” Griffin said. “I have focused on the commercial real estate needs in the Northeast for more than ten years and look forward to putting my market knowledge to work for a community-minded bank with an impressive growth record.”

Griffin holds a bachelor’s degree in Economics from Eastern Connecticut State University in Willimantic, CT. She resides in Madison, CT and will be located in First Niagara’s New England Regional Market Center at 195 Church Street in New Haven, CT.

#### **About First Niagara**

First Niagara, through its wholly owned subsidiary, First Niagara Bank, N.A., is a multi-state community-oriented bank with nearly 430 branches, approximately \$38 billion in assets, \$29 billion in deposits, and approximately 6,000 employees providing financial services to individuals, families and businesses across Upstate New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Massachusetts. For more information, visit [www.firstniagara.com](http://www.firstniagara.com).

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