

Canada's CI Financial Plans to Open U.S. Headquarters in Miami

By Sabrina Escobar



Taking a page from Canadian snowbirds, CI Financial is setting up a second home in the Sunshine State.

The Toronto-based wealth and asset manager unveiled plans Tuesday to establish a second headquarters in Miami. It's a sign of the importance CI Financial is placing on its rapid expansion into U.S. wealth management and highlights South Florida's growing prominence for the industry.

The office will house CI's U.S. leadership team and support personnel for CI Private Wealth, the company's brand name for its burgeoning U.S. operations. Executive team members will divide their time between Miami and CI's Toronto headquarters, the company said.

"Miami is an incredible place to establish our U.S. headquarters and support our fast-growing U.S. business," said CI CEO Kurt MacAlpine in a statement. "It serves as the next logical step for our expansion plans as we work to build the leading high-net-worth wealth management platform in the country. In addition, Miami is a vibrant, multicultural city that offers a deep talent pool, an attractive location for recruiting and a very business-friendly environment."

Since announcing its expansion into the U.S. in December 2019, CI Financial has acquired registered investment advisor firms at a dizzying pace, striking a total of 21 deals so far (including subacquisitions). On Monday, it announced its latest acquisition, a \$5.2 billion Silicon Valley RIA, which gives CI a beachhead in the lucrative Bay Area market. Last month, the firm also acquired a \$3.4 billion Ohio-based RIA.

Following the completion of these and other outstanding transactions, CI's U.S. wealth management assets are slated to reach \$82 billion, the company said. The company's total assets globally are expected to reach about \$263 billion.

"CI Financial is the largest financial institution to ever place a headquarters in South Florida," says Miami Mayor Francis Suarez in a statement. "The significance of this cannot be overstated and moves us further towards our goal to become the 'capital of capital.'"

South Florida has become an important market for the wealth management industry as remote work, low taxes, and warm weather have encouraged wealthy clients and firms to relocate. The number of

RIAs in downtown Miami increased by 35% between 2018 and the end of 2020—from 82 to 111— a report by the Miami Downtown Development Authority and Convergence, an industry research firm, found.

CI expects to open the new headquarters at the start of 2023. The offices will span about 20,000 square feet within 830 Brickell, a 55-story building scheduled for completion in 2022, the company said. CI is joining tech giant Microsoft and private-equity group Thoma Bravo in leasing space in the new office tower.

CI expects to keep expanding its presence in South Florida as the firm executes its U.S. growth strategy. And as long as well-priced, high-quality firms that are a good fit with CI's culture continue to come to the market, CI will remain active in the RIA M&A market, MacAlpine said in an interview this week.