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**Opportunity Fund Partners with Meriwest Credit Union, Self-Help Federal Credit Union, and UMe Credit Union, Increasing Small Businesses' Access to Credit**

*As small businesses struggle to access affordable capital during the COVID-19 pandemic, California's leading nonprofit lender joins forces with community-based financial institutions*

**San Jose, CA, Jan. 5, 2021** – Opportunity Fund, the nation's leading nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) to small businesses, today announced partnerships with Meriwest Credit Union, Self-Help Federal Credit Union, and UMe Credit Union, part of the nonprofit lenders' \$1 Billion [commitment](#) to investing in marginalized businesses nationwide in the next two years. These partnerships increase small business owners' access to transparent, affordable credit — particularly among businesses owned by women, people of color and rural entrepreneurs — allowing credit unions to confidently refer members to the nonprofit lender to meet their business credit needs responsibly while retaining the overall banking relationship.

“Credit unions and Community Development Financial Institutions like Opportunity Fund share a purpose: to ensure ready access to affordable, responsible, financial products and services in our communities,” said Luz Urrutia, CEO of Accion Opportunity Fund. “By working together, we can build a more inclusive financial landscape, especially for women, immigrant and entrepreneurs of color.”

Providing working capital loans from \$2,600 to \$100,000 to underserved businesses — including flexible underwriting criteria, less onerous documentation requirements than other lenders,

multilingual customer service representatives available to answer questions 7 days a week/12 hours per day — in a quick and customer centric manner is Opportunity Fund’s primary focus; credit unions and community bank partners are key to that effort.

“Creating and protecting ownership and economic opportunity for all is at the heart of what we do at Self-Help FCU. By collaborating with Opportunity Fund, we refer members for small business loans we don’t offer in-branch, ensuring that whether it’s us or our trusted partner Opportunity Fund, we can support entrepreneurs — especially entrepreneurs of color, women, and immigrant business owners — in making their dreams a reality,” said Sarah Brennan, SVP of Southern California for Self-Help Federal Credit Union.

“Helping people is at the heart of what we do at UMe Credit Union. Having a trusted partner in Opportunity Fund to refer our members to for small business loans that we don’t offer in-branch ensures we meet our mission and keep happy members,” said Anita Hutchinson, UMe Chief Marketing Officer.

With [credit unions](#) playing an extraordinary role in the financial support Americans need, many stepped forward to process PPP loans, welcoming hundreds of new small business owners as members in the process. Now many are looking for a mission-aligned partner to offer ongoing credit products and business support services they don’t offer. During a pilot program to test the CDFI + Credit Union partnership model in the eight months prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (July 2019 - Feb 2020), nearly 90% of the small businesses backed by Opportunity Fund are women, immigrant, or minority-owned.

**Credit Union and Community Banks interested in partnering with Opportunity Fund to provide affordable small business funding to their members and customers can contact:**

Adriana Eiriz, VP of Sales and Partnerships, [aeiriz@opportunityfund.org](mailto:aeiriz@opportunityfund.org).

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### **About Accion Opportunity Fund**

In March, 2020, Opportunity Fund and Accion, The US Network, joined forces to establish [Accion Opportunity Fund](#), the first organization focused on a national microlending strategy to meet the credit needs of small businesses – developing new products, establishing new partnerships, promoting research and financial education, and leveraging digital technologies to support mission-driven lending.

### **About Opportunity Fund**

Opportunity Fund, the nation's leading nonprofit small business lender, believes small dollar loans help hard-working entrepreneurs make lasting change in their own lives and build stronger communities by growing businesses and creating jobs. Opportunity Fund's community of donors and investors is creating an inclusive financial system that empowers women, immigrants, and minority small business owners. Our strategy combines microloans for small business owners and New Markets Tax Credit investments in high-impact community infrastructure projects. Since 1994, Opportunity Fund has deployed more than \$900 million and helped thousands of entrepreneurs invest in their families' futures. The organization has committed to lending an additional \$1.2 billion to small business owners across the country and investing \$174 million in community real estate projects by 2023.

Opportunity Fund has [earned the highest 4-star rating](#) by Charity Navigator for trust and transparency. [www.opportunityfund.org](http://www.opportunityfund.org)