



For Immediate Release

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**OPPORTUNITY FUND, THE NATION'S LEADING NONPROFIT SMALL BUSINESS LENDER,
LAUNCHES DISCOUNT LOAN CAMPAIGN FOR WOMEN SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS**

August 6, 2018, San Francisco – Opportunity Fund, the largest nonprofit lender to small businesses in California and national leader for the microfinance movement, announced today a campaign to identify, educate, mentor, and provide access to capital for women-owned small businesses.

The campaign, Opportunity Fund Empowering Women (OFEW), ofew.org, offers an affordable and responsible working capital loan that rewards borrowers with 2% off the annual interest rate when they apply for free mentoring, which is shown to have a significant long-term impact on business revenue. Borrowers who still want a loan but decline mentoring receive 1% off the annual interest rate.

OFEW loan review is holistic and considers the borrower's personal experience and business knowledge, and no prior credit history is required. Small women-owned businesses and entrepreneurs with as little as one year in business can receive funding in two to five days, once approved. Loan amounts range from \$ 5,000 up to \$ 50,000.

“By ensuring that women have equal opportunity to succeed as business founders and owners we help strengthen communities, families and local economies. Our mission is to address inequities in access to transparent, affordable credit that limit opportunities for women.” said Luz Urrutia, CEO, Opportunity Fund.

OFEW borrowers who apply for mentoring can select from one of the campaign's preferred community partners: Fresno Area Hispanic Foundation and Downtown Business Hub serving the San Joaquin Valley; Women's Business Center at Jefferson Economic Development Institute (JEDI) serving Siskiyou, Shasta, Trinity and Humboldt Counties; and Leadership for Urban Renewal Network (LURN) serving Los Angeles, Ventura and Orange Counties. For borrowers in these and other areas of the state, BusinessAdvising.org will provide mentoring support.

“Though our Community Partners program we identified like-minded nonprofits who have earned trust and established expertise helping small businesses in their communities throughout the state,” said Daniel Fernandez, Director of Microlending. “They provide technical assistance and business mentoring to ensure small business owners borrow responsibly and have a strong support system.”

Women-owned Small Business Snapshot:

- Women-owned businesses account for 39% of all U.S. firms, but receive only 16% of all traditional business loans.
- Women of color lead four out of ten small businesses.
- Latina-owned businesses have grown 137% since 2006.

“Access to responsible capital is the lifeblood of a business, and the barriers to affordable credit for women must be honestly addressed and confronted,” added Gwendy Donaker Brown, Vice President of Research and Policy. “Opportunity Fund has a long history of seeking policy change that supports equity and economic opportunity. We see this campaign as a complement to our mission.”

OFEW is part of a broad initiative by Opportunity Fund to build a community and develop resources to support women’s economic empowerment. Currently in development, Opportunity Fund’s CEO Luz Urrutia is building a group of advisors to assess the landscape on what Opportunity Fund can do to deepen its support for women entrepreneurs by developing our own financial products and services and identifying partners in the community to provide complimentary support services.

For more information about Opportunity Fund Empowering Women, visit ofew.org.

*All loan applications are subject to credit review. 2% discount applies when applicants sign up for technical assistance through OFEW partners. Opportunity Fund is an Equal Opportunity Lender and is a California licensed lender #6050609. Offer good until grant funds are depleted.

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Opportunity Fund, the nation’s leading nonprofit small business lender, believes that small amounts of money and financial advice helps people make permanent and lasting change in their own lives, driving economic mobility and building stronger communities. Opportunity Fund’s community of donors and investors helps to fund small businesses and create vibrant neighborhoods. Our strategy combines microloans for small business owners and new markets tax credit investments in high-impact infrastructure projects that provide critical medical, housing, and education services that create jobs in underserved communities. Since 1994, the team has deployed over \$700 million and helped thousands of families earn, save and invest in their own futures.

www.opportunityfund.org