

*Empowering California’s women-owned small businesses with access to*

*affordable business financing, mentoring and the opportunity to succeed.*

**“Women-owned businesses account for 39% of all U.S. firms, but receive only 16% of all traditional business loans. We must work together to ensure that women have equal opportunity to succeed as business founders and owners.”**

***Luz Urrutia, CEO, Opportunity Fund***

**Background**

We are amid a tide shift in perception about women in society and leadership, and economic opportunity and equality. This shift coincides with Opportunity Fund (OF) issuing a call to action to improve opportunities and outcomes for women through a campaign called Opportunity Fund Empowering Women. Because Opportunity Fund has consistently strived to provide responsible access to capital to those who seek it and because we want women-led business to have long term success, we are uniquely qualified to launch this campaign of encouragement, information, and ultimately, funding to help empower women-owned business owners.

Funded by grants from various funders, Opportunity Fund, in conjunction with our community partners, is tapping into growing interest in women’s economic opportunity, mentoring and equity, and how these are dependent on access to responsible and affordable capital. The OFEW campaign will feature women Opportunity Fund has already funded to showcase the impact of “Yes” on women business owners and their success.

**How OFEW works:**

Opportunity Fund and its community partners will identify, educate and nurture women-owned small business owners through targeted email, outreach, advertising and earned media to build awareness of the campaign and direct potential borrowers to [ofew.org](about:blank) to do one of the following:

* Apply for free mentoring and a loan and receive 2% off\* your annual interest rate
* Apply only for a loan and receive 1% off\* your annual interest rate

\*CONDITIONS APPLY: Businesses in California are eligible for either offer if a woman owner has at least 2% ownership. Applicants who select a mentoring partner, and are deemed eligible by that partner, are eligible for 2% off the annual interest rate. Applicants who decline a mentor and are at least 2% woman-owned are eligible for 1% of the annual interest rate.

* Not ready for free mentoring or a loan? - receive a free copy of *10 Success Tips For California Business Owners*
* Visit our blog to read about women-owned businesses success stories

**The Facts**

* 99% of women-owned businesses are small businesses
* One in three small businesses are women-owned
* Traditional lending provides only 4.4% of all funding to women-owned businesses (representing only 16% of all traditional loans).
* Latina-owned businesses grew by 87% from 2007-2012.
* Latinas earn .54 cents on the dollar compared to .80 cents for white women. Starting a business is a way of closing the wage gap.
* Based on Opportunity Fund’s lending research, one loan awarded to a women-owned business creates 3 jobs.

**OFEW Community Partners**

The following community partners have engaged with Opportunity Fund to provide outreach and mentoring to help small women-owned businesses responsibly access credit and grow their business:

* Business Advising.org – Statewide
* Fresno Area Hispanic Foundation (FAHF) – Fresno
* Women’s Business Center at Jefferson Economic Development Institute (JEDI) – Siskiyou, Shasta, Trinity and Humboldt Counties
* Leadership for Urban Renewal Network (LURN) – Los Angeles, Ventura and Orange Counties

**Contact Information**

For more information, please contact:

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