



Fueling transformational change

FY25 annual report





Building more together

Accion Opportunity Fund (AOF) is a leading nonprofit small business lender dedicated to expanding economic opportunity for underserved small business owners nationwide.

With a bold vision to become the first mission-driven, scalable, and financially sustainable lender of its kind, AOF is reimagining how capital and knowledge can work together to drive lasting success.

We are relentless in helping small business owners overcome barriers, grow into resilient businesses, and strengthen the communities they power.

Dear friends, partners, customers, and community,

This year marks a pivotal moment in AOF's 30-year journey. As we close the first year of our five-year strategic plan, I'm excited to share how we've laid the foundation to accomplish what once seemed impossible: achieving financial sustainability in our lending operation with responsible loans—while still serving the small business owners who need us most.

Our path forward accelerated when **MacKenzie Scott honored us with a second transformational gift—this time \$23 million**—building on the remarkable impact of the Test & Learn program her initial investment made possible. Her continued confidence in our mission and ambition validates what we've long believed: scaling affordable capital to more underserved small businesses will create and retain jobs and unlock billions in economic potential.

This second catalytic investment positions us to solve the Capital Access Trilemma—**making responsible capital affordable and accessible nationwide while building a financially sustainable business lending model**. For too long, Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) have been constrained by the false choice between impact, scale, and sustainability. We're making great progress proving all three are possible.

Our confidence in the future is grounded in our dual approach: **lending and learning, working in harmony**. While most lenders offer only capital, we provide comprehensive tools and support underserved small business owners often need to run their businesses. This year we launched new products—including equipment leasing and Small Business Administration (SBA) loans—and deepened

partnerships with partners like Etsy to create accelerator programs that help small businesses reach new heights.

Our new unified digital platform will seamlessly connect our lending and learning services, meeting small business owners at critical moments with precisely the right resources. When a business owner isn't quite ready for funding, we'll guide them to personalized education and coaching that builds their path to capital access.

This focus on results for small business owners extends far beyond our client base. As I've shared with policymakers and industry leaders, **CDFIs must meet this moment for the good of small business owners, the jobs they create, and the investments they make in local communities—all across America**. We need updated legislation that enables us to access diverse capital sources so we can modernize: embracing digitization standards and operating with the agility our customers demand. The future of our industry depends on our willingness to innovate while staying true to our mission.

Looking ahead, I see a transformed landscape where every creditworthy small business owner—regardless of economic status or zip code—can access the capital and knowledge they need to **build financial stability and long-term prosperity**. That future isn't a distant dream. With your continued partnership, it's within our reach.

None of this would be possible without the visionary donors, dedicated partners, and committed allies who believe in our mission. And, most importantly, without the small business owners we have the privilege to serve.

Your trust enables us to take the calculated risks that **unlock opportunities for thousands of small business owners**. Thank you for standing with us as we write the next chapter of economic opportunity.

With appreciation,

Luz Urrutia
President & CEO
Accion Opportunity Fund



Solving for access, affordability, and profitability at scale

Our five-year strategic plan

For over 30 years, AOF has invested \$1 billion in underserved businesses other lenders ignore. Where others saw risk, we saw opportunity. We built an ecosystem of support for our clients who in turn have supported over 66,000 jobs and generated over \$2.1 billion in economic activity. We’ve proven that responsible, affordable lending can scale while returning real value, but the demand for this capital and for our supportive ecosystem goes far beyond our current capacity.

To make real progress closing the \$100 billion market gap for responsible, affordable capital, AOF needs to increase our own access to capital. We must transition from subsidized to market-rate capital to generate market-rate returns for investors, which will make our lending operation self-sufficient. This structure will then free up our philanthropic dollars to be entirely dedicated to innovation, free education, policy, and advocacy.

This transition is the journey we’re on. When we succeed, we will have solved the Capital Access Trilemma—a challenge that has historically limited small business lenders from operating a sustainable lending model while offering loans that remain both accessible and affordable.

Our specialty: An overlooked market with billions in economic potential

Our approach enabled us to break through typical constraints:

- **Adaptive underwriting:** We deeply understand our borrowers’ unique situations and our proprietary underwriting models improve with every loan
- **High-touch + high-tech:** We pair digital tools with live loan specialists to guide customers through a more holistic process than an algorithm could do alone
- **Beyond lending:** We provide free education, resources, and community-building to set small businesses up for success

What it takes: \$225 million in debt capital + \$100 million in philanthropy

Our five-year plan focuses on:

- **Greater efficiency:** Smarter underwriting, automation, and a seamless customer journey
- **Wider reach:** Expand lending nationwide with targeted growth in CA, GA, and FL
- **Bigger impact:** A unified customer experience for lending and learning and new product development based on market and industry needs
- **Regenerative lending:** Every loan payment generates funds for the next borrower

When we succeed, we will unleash a wave of economic activity—for small businesses, workers, communities, and the entire economy.



5-year targets (by fiscal year 2029):

65,000
small business owners served

\$1.5 billion
in economic impact

30,000
jobs supported or retained

Financial sustainability
of our lending operation achieved

100% of philanthropic investment
supports innovation, education, and policy/advocacy

AOF’s fiscal year is July–June.

When we succeed, we’ll prove that investing in small businesses is good business. We’ll attract new capital to the market and seed tremendous economic growth. This isn’t charity or just about AOF—it’s about good business economics and changing how America funds opportunity.

Luz Urrutia
President & CEO
Accion Opportunity Fund



Impact by the numbers FY25



Lending snapshot

\$1 billion

deployed since inception

\$135,180,672

total loans originated
(39% increase from FY24)

\$50,916

average loan size

3x

more customers approved with new credit scoring
and operational improvements

Top 5 Industries by number of loans

1. Trucking

Moves goods across the country, keeping supply chains
running and communities connected.

2. Management, scientific & technical consulting

Experts who help businesses operate smarter—improving
logistics, marketing, HR, and sustainability.

3. Special food services

Food trucks, caterers, and service contractors delivering fresh,
flexible dining experiences.

4. Restaurants & other eating places

Local restaurants, cafés, and snack bars that create jobs and
bring people together.

5. Services to buildings & dwellings

Janitorial, landscaping, and cleaning services that keep
workplaces and homes welcoming.

Borrower profile

2,435

unique borrowers

74%

of borrowers are low-income

67%

of subprime borrowers were near
prime—or better—at payoff

Business advising and education

273,942

small businesses accessed online educational resources

94%

graduation rate from educational cohort programs

Economic impact

\$270 million

estimated economic impact

13,997

estimated number of jobs created or retained
(174% increase compared to FY24)

90

Net Promoter Score from borrowers who engage with
business advising

90%

Learn with AOF users demonstrate mastery of the
financial concept taught in their courses



New products and partnerships to reach more borrowers

Flexible and market-responsive: Our new equipment leasing product

AOF launched a new product designed to offer a flexible pathway to small business ownership within the trucking industry. Our leasing product does not require a down-payment and provides a secure on-ramp for customers to establish their enterprise and revenue stream for 18-30 months before committing to purchasing their equipment. We developed this product based on our deep experience lending in the trucking industry, listening to customer needs and pain points.



U.S. Small Business Administration

AOF is proud to announce our certification as an SBA7(a) Community Advantage Small Business Lending Company (SBLC). This allows us to continue delivering our mission to expand access to capital for underserved small businesses.

- **Better terms and lower costs for borrowers:** The SBA guarantee allows for longer terms, lower rates, and higher loan amounts (now up to \$350,000) for small business borrowers.
- **Access to more underserved markets:** As an SBA-backed lender, we can lend to small business owners who may not otherwise qualify for one of our loans.
- **Enhanced network:** Being part of the official SBA lending network connects us to a broader ecosystem of lenders, borrowers, and resources.

Partnering for greater reach: Access to thousands of new food and beverage businesses

AOF partnered with the National Restaurant Association (NRA) to reach more food and beverage small business owners nationwide—a sector that represents one of the largest small business communities but often faces significant capital barriers. The partnership formalizes AOF as a capital access partner to NRA members and creates a new channel for us to deliver meaningful educational programming on navigating economic uncertainty, rising costs, and shifting consumer behavior. Through our joint survey of over 100,000 small food and beverage businesses, we learned they need fast, flexible

capital between \$5,000–\$100,000, and are often trapped in predatory loans that compromise their financial health and growth potential. AOF will offer NRA members free educational resources alongside affordable capital—a combination designed to create financial well-being and sustainable business growth, even in a sector known for tight margins and high failure rates. Our high-touch and high-tech model allows AOF to build relationships with our borrowers and offer solutions that lead to long-term success.





I wasn't taught financial literacy growing up. I didn't have two years of financials or the know-how passed down from family. Traditional lenders weren't an option.

Customer: Luismiguel Flores

Business: [Woodfire Pies](#)

Location: Monterey Park, CA

AOF support: Mobile food loan and loan repayment deferment during LA wildfires

Click [HERE](#) to watch Luismiguel's story

Woodfire Pies: Serving warmth, one pizza at a time

When Luismiguel Flores first began experimenting with wood-fired pizza, it was just a few pop-ups—a way to share his food with friends, family, and neighbors. The response was immediate: people loved the flavor, the craft, and the sense of community his cooking created. To take his pizza from hobby to business, Luismiguel turned to AOF for capital and support. AOF financed a custom mobile trailer with a 4,000-pound Italian wood-fire oven that became the heart and soul of Woodfire Pies.

From the beginning, Luismiguel's community rallied behind him. During the pandemic, local families and neighbors kept orders coming in, helping keep Woodfire Pies alive. But when the California wildfires displaced so many, orders came to a halt. AOF acted quickly to reach out to impacted customers and provided Luismiguel with payment deferral so he could continue paying his staff during this critical time.

Looking ahead, Luismiguel dreams of expanding into both a brick-and-mortar restaurant and a retrofitted food truck for greater mobility. But no matter how Woodfire Pies grows, he wants to stay connected to the neighborhood that believed in him first.

For him, Woodfire Pies is about more than pizza. It's about warmth—the literal warmth of the oven that gives his food its unmistakable flavor, and the warmth people feel when they gather to share it.

“As a business owner, it's not just about you—it's about your team. That relief gave me space to take care of my people.”

— Luismiguel Flores

The AOF difference

High tech + high touch: AOF's credit management approved Luismiguel when traditional banks saw only risk, and when Woodfire Pies faced a potential crisis after the wildfires, we stepped in as economic first responders for Luismiguel and his team.

Industry expertise: AOF is one of the nation's top lenders in the trucking industry, and we understand what these businesses need to succeed.

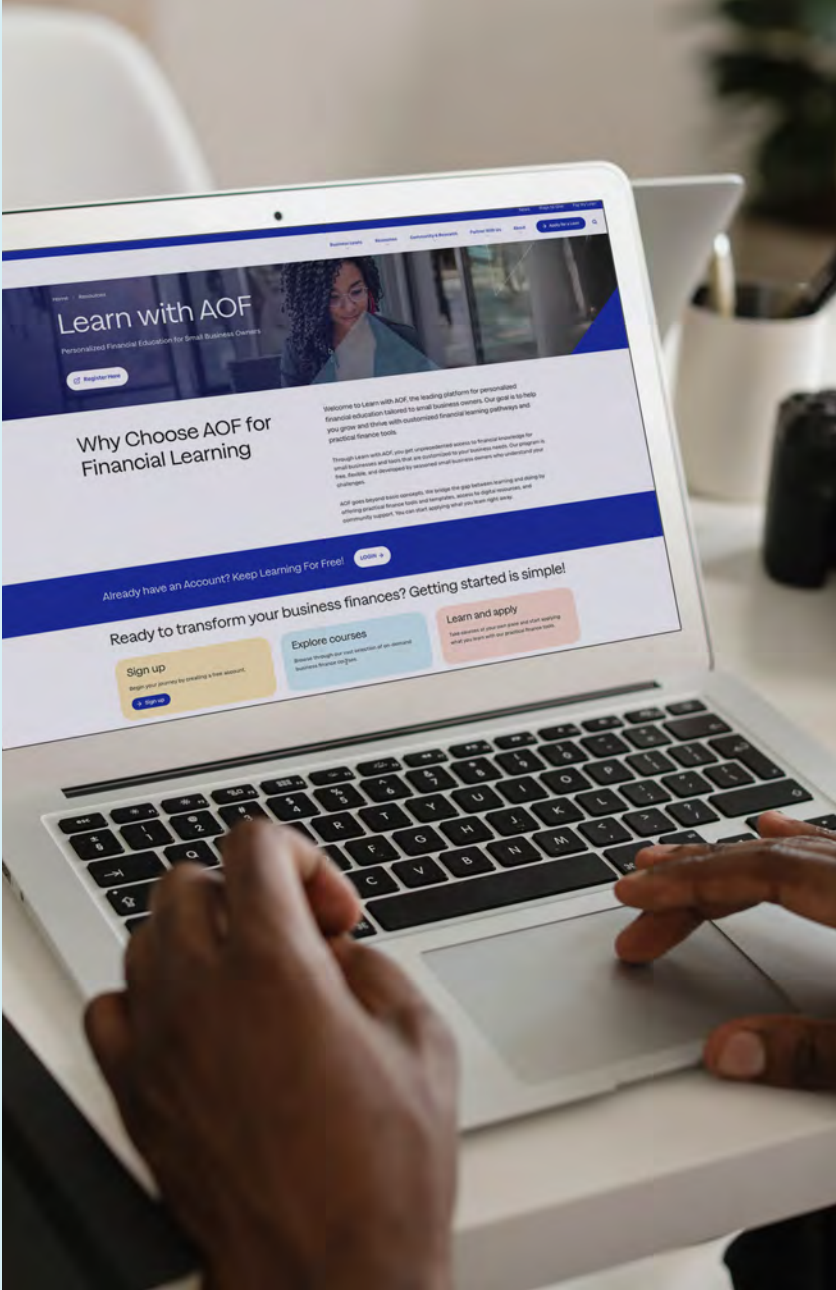


Business advising and education

Accion Opportunity Fund recognizes that access to capital alone can't always fuel business growth—small business owners need knowledge and trusted guidance to navigate ownership challenges. Our comprehensive suite of free advising and education services provides the resources that lead to resilient, sustainable businesses.

Unlike many alternatives, our content is built by and for the communities we serve. Our services are designed to meet small business owners where they are—whether they need help building an online presence, expanding their customer base, or pricing their products effectively. Importantly, **participation is open to all small business owners**; you don't need to have an AOF loan to access our educational resources and support.

Our goal is simple: provide small business owners with the tools, knowledge, and connections they need to build resilient businesses that improve their lives and communities.



Center for Inclusive Growth

Economic opportunity is about more than access to capital. It's also about giving underinvested small business owners access to financial knowledge, tools, and strategy needed to establish solid financial footing, plan long-term, and access responsible and affordable financial products. This is the powerful combination AOF brings to the table for small business owners.”

Sandy Fernandez
Vice President of Social Impact
Center for Inclusive Growth
& Head of the Mastercard Strive USA program

- **900+ users learned with AOF in FY25**
- **90% demonstrated mastery of the financial topic addressed in their course**



We created the first of its kind digital financial learning platform for small businesses

In partnership with Mastercard Strive USA, a program of the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, we launched a new financial learning platform created specifically for small business in the fall of 2024. The platform, called Learn with AOF, targets improved small business financial stability with an eye toward helping the business build credit and capital readiness.

We built Learn with AOF in response to hearing from small business owners that existing online financial education was

not only overwhelming to navigate, but ineffective at preparing them for capital access and real-world business finance challenges. Our free and flexible platform fills a critical gap in the market and advances our bold vision to build a financial system where every small business owner can succeed.

Learn with AOF features:

- **Peer-to-peer learning:** Digital platform featuring content co-created with small business owners who've overcome real financial challenges

- **Expert-informed curriculum:** Built on AOF's 30+ years of experience serving millions of business owners
- **Accessible and flexible:** Free platform designed for business owners at any stage, accessible anytime, anywhere
- **Personalized pathways:** Customized learning tracks based on each user's specific financial needs and challenges
- **Actionable resources:** Users unlock practical tools and templates to immediately bridge the gap between learning and doing



From basement startup to transformative growth: How Ace High Co. seized opportunities to grow with AOF and Etsy

The challenge

Ace High Co. began as a scrappy startup in a coffee shop basement, where founders Christian Kettenbeil and Nate Hamood experimented with hair product formulations during late-night shifts. While early success brought them their own production space by 2019, the pandemic brought their momentum to a halt. With barbershops closed and customers staying home, the business faced an uncertain future.

AOF’s solution: lending + learning

In 2023, AOF provided Ace High Co. with a loan that offered immediate financial relief, enabling Christian to clear vendor payments, hire a new team member and focus on strategic planning.

Then in 2024, Ace High Co. joined the Creators Momentum Business Accelerator, a strategic partnership between AOF and Etsy, which helped spark new levels of growth and innovation:

- **Marketing transformation:** Strategic guidance on email strategy gave way to a comprehensive marketing engine with weekly content and automated flows
- **Strategic advertising:** A grant via the accelerator enabled purposeful ad testing and strategy development
- **Community connection:** Collaborative learning with fellow small business owners fostered a sense of shared growth and expanded long-term community networks

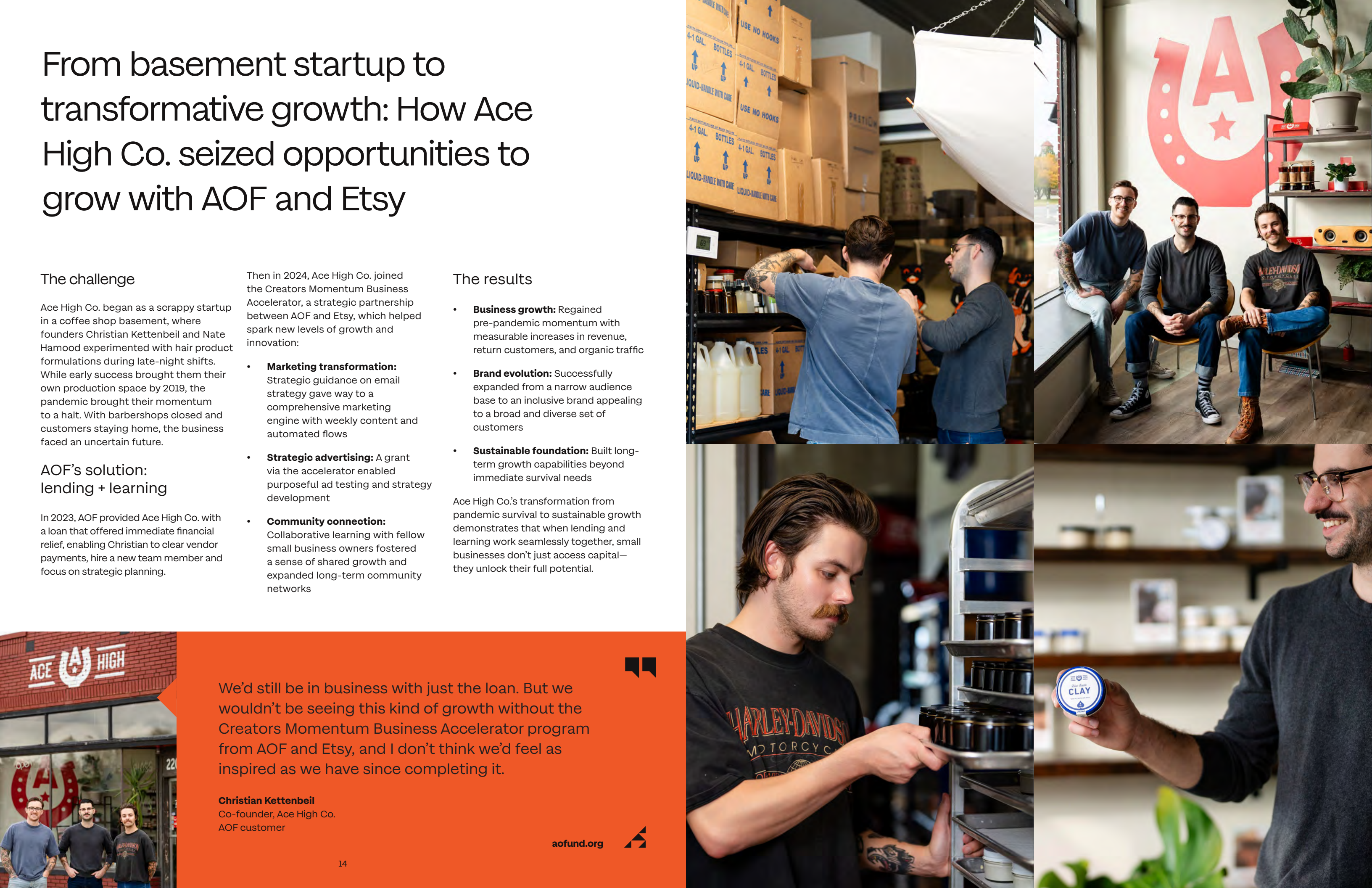
The results

- **Business growth:** Regained pre-pandemic momentum with measurable increases in revenue, return customers, and organic traffic
- **Brand evolution:** Successfully expanded from a narrow audience base to an inclusive brand appealing to a broad and diverse set of customers
- **Sustainable foundation:** Built long-term growth capabilities beyond immediate survival needs

Ace High Co.’s transformation from pandemic survival to sustainable growth demonstrates that when lending and learning work seamlessly together, small businesses don’t just access capital—they unlock their full potential.

We’d still be in business with just the loan. But we wouldn’t be seeing this kind of growth without the Creators Momentum Business Accelerator program from AOF and Etsy, and I don’t think we’d feel as inspired as we have since completing it.

Christian Kettenbeil
Co-founder, Ace High Co.
AOF customer



Rewriting the rules of lending to expand economic opportunity

At AOF, we are committed to challenging outdated assumptions that limit access to capital for small business owners. Our Test & Learn initiative marked a major milestone in that effort.

From 2021 to 2023, as small businesses across the country struggled to survive the COVID-19 pandemic, AOF launched an innovative pilot program called Test & Learn. The goal was simple but bold: test new ways of lending more capital in the short term and use the results to design a smarter, more expansive lending system for the future.

Through this initiative, AOF deployed more than \$15 million in capital to 1,632 small business owners who would not have previously qualified for a loan from AOF. Relationships with these borrowers helped AOF learn more about small business owners who are normally—but wrongly—denied loans, including those struggling with the effects of predatory debt, those with no credit history, and those who own new businesses but have many years of industry experience as employees. Many of these small business owners—despite having significantly less revenue and household income than our traditional borrowers—repaid their loans successfully.

This confirmed what AOF has long suspected: that our financial systems are underestimating the potential of small business owners located in low-income communities.

Using repayment data from the Test & Learn pilot borrowers, AOF launched a new credit scorecard* in late 2024. We used the revised credit criteria to fund 100 additional small businesses that would not have previously qualified for an AOF loan. Looking ahead, **we estimate our new scorecard will increase the number of businesses we serve annually by 17-22%.**

By embedding continuous learning into our lending operations, AOF is actively working to close the credit gap, improving our credit risk models, and proving that financial sustainability and responsible, transparent lending can go hand in hand. With continued investment in research and innovation, **AOF is rewriting the rules of who gets funded**—and why.

*A credit scorecard is a tool that helps lenders evaluate loan applications by weighing multiple factors—such as revenue, payment history, and financial behaviors—to decide who qualifies for credit.



New Markets Tax Credit program: Transforming communities through strategic investment



Accion Opportunity Fund’s New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) program uses **federal tax credits to attract private investment into underserved communities**. As a certified Community Development Entity (CDE), AOF provides below-market-rate financing for transformative community development projects that create jobs, expand essential services, and revitalize neighborhoods where access to patient, affordable capital has been limited.

Impact in action:
The Garden at Raleigh
Rescue Mission

In April 2025, AOF provided \$12 million in NMTC financing for “The Garden” in Knightdale, North Carolina—a 91,306 square foot campus sponsored by Raleigh Rescue Mission. The Garden will provide long-term transitional housing for unhoused women and children alongside a children’s learning center and wraparound services including recovery programs, vocational training, financial education, and healthcare services. This integrated approach is designed to address the root causes of housing instability and build pathways to financial independence.

Community impact

780 individuals

served annually
(100% individuals served were low-income)

66 permanent jobs

created

185 construction jobs

generated

The Garden demonstrates how AOF’s NMTC program creates lasting change that extends far beyond immediate beneficiaries. Projects like these not only strengthen entire communities but demonstrate that strategic capital deployment can simultaneously address urgent social needs and generate sustainable economic development.

In July 2025, the New Markets Tax Credit program was made permanent with a \$5 billion annual allocation in the federal budget. This change provides greater certainty for investors and a consistent flow of capital into low-income communities. NMTC has historically created \$8 in economic development for every \$1 of federal funding, so a \$5 billion annual allocation has the potential to create \$40 billion in annual economic benefits for the U.S.



We are grateful that our ministry team can move forward with confidence, impacting four times the number of clients we currently serve, thanks to our New Markets Tax Credit partnership with Accion Opportunity Fund.

John Lockett
President & CEO
Raleigh Rescue Mission



Policy & advocacy

Our policy and advocacy work is core to our ability to fulfill our mission. To ensure all small business owners have access to the responsible capital and resources they need to succeed, we advocate for transparent policies that expand economic opportunity and remove barriers for aspiring small business owners from all backgrounds.

Policy leadership in a time of change

Following the March 14 “Continuing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy” Executive Order 14238 that raised questions about the CDFI Fund’s* future, AOF leveraged our national presence as a sector leader to take action. Our response included:

Immediate advocacy:

President and CEO Luz Urrutia met with bipartisan congressional leaders in Washington, D.C. to share data on the more than 1,400 certified CDFIs nationwide that deliver over \$300 billion annually to underserved communities.

Securing stability:

Our swift engagement with Treasury officials and policymakers helped secure multiple public statements from Treasury and congressional leaders affirming the CDFI Fund’s value and statutory protections.

Strengthening capacity:

We partnered with a policy and advocacy consulting firm that provided access to top officials and experts to help AOF navigate a changing policy environment.

Ensuring resilience:

We diversified our capital sources and implemented strategic contingency plans to guarantee uninterrupted service to our small business customers.

In late March 2025, the U.S. Treasury Department confirmed that the CDFI Fund’s core programs are protected by law and will continue operating. This important clarification helped ensure that funding can keep reaching underserved small businesses. We’re proud to have played a role in supporting this outcome and remain vigilant as we monitor policies that impact our customers and small business owners nationwide.

*The CDFI Fund, a program of the U.S. Department of the Treasury, provides capital and technical assistance to certified Community Development Financial Institutions. Its support helps CDFIs attract private investment and expand access to affordable financing in underserved communities.



Financials FY25

Statement of activities	(\$ in thousands)	2025
Earned revenues		35,773
Loan loss provision		-13,341
Fundraising		30,812
Total revenues		\$53,244
Program expenses		32,386
Management & general		7,984
Fundraising		1,509
Net surplus		\$41,879
Statement of position	(\$ in thousands)	
Operating cash		36,826
Program cash		33,549
Loans receivable, net		170,419
Other assets		19,866
Total assets		\$260,660
Accounts payable		8,983
Notes payable		176,083
Total liabilities		\$185,036
Net assets		
Without donor restrictions		65,162
With donor restrictions		10,462
Total net assets		75,624
Total liabilities and net assets		\$260,660
Key metrics		
Net asset ratio		29%
30+ loans days past due		2.83%
Net charge-off rate		3.91%
Loan originations \$		\$135,180,672
Loan originations #		2,657
Managed loan portfolio \$		\$226,037
Managed loan portfolio #		6,049
1:1 coaching		1,724
Webinars, events & personalized learning		6,664



Funders

In FY25, a second transformational gift from MacKenzie Scott reinforced AOF’s ability to make small business growth more accessible nationwide. We are grateful to Ms. Scott and the following supporters, whose generosity empowers us to innovate, expand our programs, and continue to meet the growing needs of underserved small business owners:

- Ameriprise Financial
- Bank of America
- Bloomberg Philanthropies
- BNY
- California Investment & Innovation Program
- Capital One
- Cathay Bank
- Charles Schwab Bank
- City National Bank
- Coca-Cola Foundation
- Discover
- eBay Foundation
- Economic Justice Fund
- Faultline Foundation
- FedEx
- First Citizens Bank
- Hutton Family Foundation
- KKR
- Molson Coors
- Nasdaq Philanthropic Foundation
- PayPal
- PennyMac
- Samuel Adams - Brewing the American Dream
- SMBC MANUBANK
- The Millstreet Foundation, Inc.
- TKF Spirit Fund
- Travelers
- U.S. Bank Foundation
- Webster Bank
- Western Alliance Bank
- Whitehill Family Foundation



Thank you to our Southern California Wildfire Relief partners

We are deeply grateful to PayPal, Bank of America – LA, CAMEO, and the TK Foundation for their swift and generous support in helping Southern California small businesses recover after the January wildfires. Your contributions provided critical relief and played a vital role in helping small business owners rebuild and restore hope to their communities.

Board of directors

Accion Opportunity Fund extends our sincere thanks to our Board of Directors, committee members, and task forces for their dedication and guidance. Listed below are Board members who served from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

- Greg Avis**, Chair
Bangtail Partners, Managing Partner
Board Member since 2015
- Todd Baker**
Broadmoor Consulting, Managing Principal
Board Member since 2018
- Swati Bhatia**, Secretary
Santander Bank, N.A, Head of Retail Banking & Transformation
Board Member since 2019
- Phil Black**
True Ventures, Co-Founder
Board Member since 2019
- Dickson Chu**
Copper, Inc., CEO
Board Member since 2018
- Caretha Coleman**, Vice Chair
Coleman Consulting, CEO
Board Member since 2020
- Solana Cozzo**
Mastercard, SVP, Global Debit Product Mgt
Board Member since 2020
- Joni Cropper**
Cropper Family Fund
Board Member since 2016

- Debra Engel**
Engel Family Fund
Board Member since 2017
- Madeleine Fackler**
International Rescue Committee, CIO
Board Member since 2019
- Brian Graham**
Klaros Group, Managing Partner
Board Member since 2016
- Parker Hudnut**
ICEF Public Schools, CEO
Board Member since 2017
- Lata Krishnan**
Shah Capital Partners
Board Member since 2020
- Juanita Lott**
Portfolia Investments, Partner
Board Member since 2020
- Samuel Ramos**
Global Atlantic Financial Group, Chief Legal Officer, General Counsel & Secretary
Board Member since 2023
- Michael Schlein**
Accion, President & CEO
Board Member since 2020
- Diana Taylor**
Accion, Board Chair
Board Member since 2020
- Luz Urrutia**, President & CEO
Accion Opportunity Fund
Board Member since 2018
- Karthik Venkataraman**
Accion, COO
Board Member since 2024



Building more together



aofund.org