

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Iowa Credit Union Foundation Announces \$150,000 Grant Initiative to Increase Financial Inclusion in Iowa**

*Announces award winners and raises \$103,000 at annual fundraiser event*

**IOWA** – The Iowa Credit Union Foundation (ICUF) recently announced a new three-year, \$150,000 investment in a grant initiative that will address barriers to financial well-being for minority populations in Iowa. The new “Financial Inclusion Grant Program” follows the recent ICUF statewide report [“Economic Realities of Communities of Color”](#), published earlier this year, that identified challenges faced by Iowa’s most vulnerable communities.

ICUF will work with Iowa credit unions to offer grant opportunities for nonprofit organizations that work to close racial wealth gaps, expand financial inclusion opportunities, and improve the financial well-being of the individuals and communities credit unions serve across the state of Iowa. The grants will target common barriers to financial inclusion, like access to affordable housing, business ownership, childcare, education, employment, healthcare and more. More information will be available soon, and the first grant cycle begins in early 2024.

“After releasing the ‘Economic Realities of Communities of Color’ report earlier this year, we knew we had more work to do to address barriers to financial inclusion in Iowa,” said Ena Babic Barnes, Executive Director of ICUF. “Our team and the Foundation Board are proud to announce this new grant initiative that will help address challenges identified in the report and help more Iowan families access economic opportunities.”

The grant program was announced at ICUF’s annual Benefit Night Fundraiser on September 14<sup>th</sup> in Coralville, IA. At the event, more than \$103,000 was raised to support ICUF’s mission and programming.

Two Iowa credit union leaders were recognized with the ICUF Community Impact Award, which was established to recognize individuals and organizations within the Iowa credit union industry who have demonstrated outstanding civic and charitable responsibility through volunteerism, advocacy, and philanthropy in service toward community-based charitable causes.

This year’s award winners were Monte Berg, retired CEO of Veridian Credit Union, and Lindsey Gould, Marketing & Media Specialist at Community 1st Credit Union.

“It was an honor to present this year’s Community Impact Award to such deserving leaders in the credit union movement,” said Marian Holmes, Chair of the ICUF Board. “Monte and Lindsey are inspirational examples of leaders living the ‘People Helping People’ philosophy, and they’ve truly made an impact in our state as we work to improve the financial lives of Iowans.”

Founded in 1995 as the philanthropic arm of the ICUL, ICUF’s primary focus is championing the financial well-being of Iowans through credit unions. Guided by the credit union philosophy of people helping people, ICUF champions financial well-being for all through its various programs, grants and scholarships. For more information, visit [www.IowaCreditUnionFoundation.org](http://www.IowaCreditUnionFoundation.org).