



ACCESS TO CAPITAL FOR ENTREPRENEURS

678.335.5600  | 877.287.6081  | [info@aceloans.org](mailto:info@aceloans.org)  | [www.aceloans.org](http://www.aceloans.org) 

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Nancy Howard  
[communications@aceloans.org](mailto:communications@aceloans.org)  
Tel: 470-615-1288

## ACE | Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs Welcomes New Regional Director for Expansion to South Georgia

Atlanta, Georgia, April 20, 2023 – ACE | Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs announced today that Tommie Beth Willis of Colquitt County, GA has been named Regional Director of its South Georgia office. Willis comes to ACE from the Moultrie-Colquitt County Chamber of Commerce where she served as president since 2016. Her efforts at the Chamber were focused on community involvement, promotion and membership benefits, and managing daily operations and the Chamber of Commerce staff. Willis will be responsible for establishing the ACE office in Tifton to serve all of South Georgia and seek out strong community relationships to support small business owners in the region. She will also build and lead a team to manage lending and operations for the area.

As the largest community development financial institution (CDFI) serving small businesses in Georgia, ACE aims to expand its lending capabilities beyond its current 68 Georgia county footprint, which includes metro Atlanta and North Georgia. “Our expansion to South Georgia will allow us to meet increased demand and support the growing needs of Georgia’s small business owners in rural and underserved communities,” said Grace Fricks, president and CEO of ACE. “We are thrilled to welcome Tommie Beth to our team. Her extensive experience and connections in South Georgia are going to make our expansion more effective. With her leadership and ACE’s partnerships with other local CDFIs, small to mid-size businesses in rural and urban areas across South Georgia will have access to more options for much needed capital and business advisory services to help them grow and expand their businesses and communities.”

Willis has a passion for working with businesses and seeing them succeed. “I am excited and humbled for this opportunity to continue serving local businesses and those across our region in a different capacity,” she said. “As we see more entrepreneurs seeking to open and grow their businesses, ACE will be positioned here in South Georgia to assist them with many of their needs. From loans to business mentoring to networking, ACE will help build bridges and connect dots for businesses owned by women, minorities, and those in underserved areas. My goal is to use contacts I have made through the years to help guide connections with entrepreneurs across the region that can benefit from the services ACE provides.

An enthusiastic Willis added, “I look forward to working with businesses to help our region grow and become stronger, opening doors for business owners in our community for generations to come.”

504 Fair Street SW  
Atlanta, GA 30313

3173 Hwy 129 North  
Cleveland, GA 30528



Born and raised in Colquitt County, Willis is a graduate of Colquitt County High School, and is a native of the Norman Park community. In addition to her work in community development, Willis brings 30+ years of marketing experience and 20 years of business management experience. She has served on the United Way of Colquitt County Board of Directors, the SRTC Marketing Program Advisor Committee, the CrossRoads For Her Ministry Advisor Committee, and the GACCE (Georgia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives) Board of Directors for Region 10. She is also a member of the Moultrie Kiwanis Club, and a member of the Heritage Church in Moultrie.

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**About Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs Inc. (ACE)**

ACE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and community development financial institution (CDFI) that provides loans and business development resources to help its borrowers create and grow sustainable businesses. ACE is the resource of choice for those who are typically not financed fully by traditional lenders. Since 2000, ACE has loaned more than \$171 million to over 2,300 entrepreneurs, who have created or saved more than 18,000 jobs in Georgia. With a focus on underserved people and places, ACE connects small businesses owned by women, people of color and low to moderate income entrepreneurs in metro Atlanta and North Georgia with capital and coaching to sustain their businesses, retain their employees, and thereby support their local communities. ACE is supported by grants and other forms of funding from banks, foundations, government entities and corporations to assist in its mission to help underserved business owners. For more information, visit <https://aceloans.org/>.