



ACCESS TO CAPITAL FOR ENTREPRENEURS

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ACE Celebrates Its 24-Year Legacy of Growing Georgia Businesses at the Annual Awards Fundraiser & Dinner

Atlanta, Georgia, September 23, 2024 – [ACE | Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs](#) held its [Annual Awards Fundraiser and Dinner](#) on September 19th in Atlanta, celebrating a 24-year legacy of growing Georgia businesses. The event, ACE's largest to date, hosted over 200 attendees at [Savanna Hall at Zoo Atlanta](#). It highlighted strong partnerships with clients, funders, and fellow Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), showcasing entrepreneurial excellence and the significant impact of supporting small businesses on Georgia communities.

"It was the vision of a more inclusive world that drove our Founder and CEO, [Grace C. Fricks](#) to open doors to diverse entrepreneurs," said [Andréa R. Chambers](#), ACE Assistant Director of Fund Development who led the team that coordinated the event. "We are incredibly proud of ACE's legacy of impact across Georgia!"

[Crystal Edmonson](#), Broadcast Editor of the *Atlanta Business Chronicle*, served as the Mistress of Ceremony. The celebration united honorees, special guests, ACE senior management, staff, and board to not only highlight ACE clients and partners, but to also honor Fricks as she retires from her post as President & CEO. Current ACE Chief of Strategic Partnerships, [Martina Edwards](#) was also welcomed as incoming CEO beginning January 2025.

In addition to the beautiful awards presented, the three client winners each received a \$2,500 scholarship from ACE for their businesses. The honorees were:

- **Commercial Impact Award**, presented to: [MuniRem Environmental LLC](#) | [Dr. Valentine Nzengung](#) ([VIDEO](#))
- **Small Business Impact Award**, presented to: [Bolivar Coffee](#) | [Nicolas Jaramillo Angel](#) ([VIDEO](#))
- **The Ripple Effect Award**, presented to: [Dragon Academy](#) | [Fern Pegus](#) ([VIDEO](#))

A new award was also introduced in honor of ACE President and CEO, Grace Fricks. The Grace C. Fricks Founder's Award is given to an ACE business owner, partner, or volunteer, past or present, who has made an exceptional impact on building entrepreneurship and strengthening communities by supporting others beyond themselves. This year's **Grace C. Fricks Founder's Award** honoree was [James Daniel](#) of [App Studios](#) in Dahlonega, GA ([VIDEO](#)).

The **J. Alton Wingate Economic Partnership Award** is presented to a partner that plays a significant role in ACE's impact story. This year, [The Rockefeller Foundation](#) was honored with the Wingate Award in recognition of its donations to ACE totaling \$6 million, which helped ACE deploy \$14.4 million in loan capital to underserved borrowers, enabling clients to save more than \$865,000 in interest. The award was received by [Chris Weaver](#), Executive Director of the Economic Coalition of The Rockefeller Foundation, ([VIDEO](#)).

504 Fair Street SW
Atlanta, GA 30313

3173 Hwy 129 North
Cleveland, GA 30528

1001 Love Avenue
Tifton, GA 31794



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The ACE Awards presenters and speakers included:

- [William Zawrotny](#), JD, Jones Day, ACE Board Chair
- [Glenn Bachman](#), Financial Advisor, ACE | Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs
- [Sandy Headley](#), Vice President, ACE | Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs
- [Marietta Murton](#), Small Business Loan Officer- Hispanic Initiative, ACE | Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs
- [Martina Edwards](#), Chief of Strategic Partnerships, ACE | Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs
- [Grace Fricks](#), MBA, President & CEO, ACE | Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs

Event sponsors included:

Founders Circle: Piedmont Bank

Impact: Georgia Power and Southern Company

Champion: The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, JP Morgan Chase & Company, PNC Bank, Wells Fargo

Access: Bank of America, Fifth Third Bank, Living Stories, Northern Trust, South State Bank, Travelers Insurance

Supporters and Friends: Capital Partners Certified Development Company, Fulton County Economic Development

Learn more about The Rockefeller Foundation and the impact of the U.S. Economic Opportunity Coalition [HERE](#)

All of the videos showcased at the event are available on [ACE's YouTube Channel HERE](#).

View the [2024 ACE Awards Photo Gallery HERE](#).

If you'd like to share photos from the event with us, please upload them to our [Shared ACE Awards Photo Gallery](#). To share photos and feedback on social media, use **the hashtag #ACEAnnualAwards** — and be sure to tag us: [@access-to-capital-for-entrepreneurs](#) on LinkedIn, [@acecdfi](#) on Instagram and [@acesstocapitalforentrepreneurs](#) on Facebook.

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About ACE | Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs Inc.

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 an SBA Microloan Intermediary and a USDA Intermediary Relender and the resource of choice for those who are typically not financed fully by traditional lenders. With a mission and focus on underserved people and places, ACE connects small businesses owned by women, people of color and low to moderate income entrepreneurs in across Georgia with capital and coaching to sustain their businesses, retain their employees, and thereby support their local communities. Since 2000, ACE has loaned more than \$200 million in financial support and services to approximately 2,600 small businesses, who have created or saved more than 21,000 jobs in Georgia. 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/>.