



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ACE Proudly Celebrates Dual Milestone ~ 25 Years of Growing Georgia Businesses and Deploying \$250 Million in Loans

Atlanta, GA, April 15, 2025 – ACE | Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs proudly celebrates a dual milestone—its 25th anniversary and deploying over a quarter billion dollars (\$250 million) in lending capital, which has fueled the growth and success of more than 2,800 small businesses in Georgia. Since funding its first loan in 2000, ACE has played a vital role in empowering entrepreneurs in Georgia by providing CAPITAL + COACHING + CONNECTIONS. In recognition of the 25th anniversary celebration, ACE is announcing the launch of the *25 for 25 Anniversary Campaign* — an initiative honoring 25 years of impact while investing in the next generation of diverse entrepreneurs who are shaping Georgia’s economic future.

Visionary beginnings

Founded by Grace C. Fricks with an initial grant of \$50,000, ACE began as a modest loan fund in four North Georgia counties, operating from space in her laundry room. Under Fricks’ visionary leadership, the organization has expanded its reach to both urban and rural entrepreneurs and has become Georgia’s largest small business focused Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). ACE has stood the test of time, standing in the gaps for businesses in need during multiple economic downturns. In 2023, ACE proudly opened an office in Tifton and now serves business owners in all 159 Georgia counties. With a strong commitment to serving underfunded businesses and communities, ACE meets the needs of under resourced entrepreneurs.

ACE builds lasting businesses

Through the years, ACE has not only provided capital but has also fostered lasting relationships with business owners, equipping them with the tools and guidance needed for long-term success. **Tennille Carter** turned to ACE for working capital to scale her company **Atlanta Bookkeeping Solutions (ABS)** in 2010. She expanded her business with a working capital loan which enabled her to purchase equipment and hire a team to support her company’s growth. Fifteen years later, ABS is still operating and going strong.

“Instead of just lending me the money, ACE helped me with advisory services,” Carter said. “I learned so much from ACE. And those additional services really help businesses grow instead of just getting by.”

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Leading into the future

Entering its 25th year, ACE has transitioned leadership to Martina Edwards, who now enthusiastically serves at the helm as President and CEO, after serving as Chief of Strategic Partnerships for six years.

"Celebrating 25 years is not just about reflecting on our past achievements but also about envisioning the future," said Edwards. "We remain steadfast in our mission to provide access to capital, coaching, and connections, and ensuring that every entrepreneur has the opportunity and support to succeed. With the support of valuable business and community partners, ACE is forging a path to support 1,500 businesses and create 10,000 jobs in Georgia by providing an additional \$250 million in loans through our 5-year strategic growth plan. ACE's commitment to excellence, combined with continued partnership and investment, will allow this important work and its ripple effect to last for decades to come."

To learn how you can impact Georgia's small businesses through our "25 for 25 Anniversary Campaign", contact Tonya Rapley at 678-335-5600 or visit aceloans.org.

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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 advisory services to help underserved entrepreneurs build and grow sustainable businesses. With a focus on supporting under resourced business owners, ACE connects small businesses across Georgia with the capital and coaching they need to thrive. With offices in West Atlanta, Cleveland, and Tifton, and Women's Business Centers in Norcross and Savannah, ACE is a trusted resource for communities statewide. Its work is made possible through support from banks, foundations, government agencies, and corporate partners. <http://aceloans.org>.