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Planning the Future of the Community Development Financial Institutions.

At the 2016 CDFI Institute, attendees discussed where the industry started, its current state and plans for the future of CDFIs

WASHINGTON, March 17, 2016 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ — Last week, the 22nd Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Institute was held in our nation's capital. The event, hosted by the CDFI Coalition, drew over 150 community development stakeholders from around the nation. Prominent Members of Congress, Senior Treasury Department staff and panels of CDFI experts participated in the Institute.

A highlight of the two-day event included a panel on the future of the CDFI Industry. The panel took place during lunch on the first day of the Institute, and featured a presentation on the industry trends. Attendees were invited to weigh in on where they see the industry presently and where they predict it will head in the next few years. Paul Anderson of Rapoza Associates presented on CDFI Fund data trends the firm analyzed on behalf of the Coalition. Panelists, including Calvin Holmes of Chicago Community Loan Fund and Tanya Fiddler of the Native CDFI Network, as well as the moderator, Lori Canady of Alaska Benteh Capital, commented on their perspectives from within the industry.

Rapoza Associates will be using the data and comments resulting from the conversations at the Institute to prepare a comprehensive report on the future of CDFIs that is expected to be released in late summer. During the presentation, Anderson noted that in the wake of the Great Recession, CDFIs are increasingly targeting loans and investments to America's highest poverty communities. The share of CDFI loans and investments going to America's most severely distressed communities increased from 27.3 percent in 2004 to 43.8 percent in 2013.

"There are many economically distressed communities still working to jumpstart their local economies and grow business opportunities and jobs, but access to capital often impedes progress," said James R. Klein, CEO Emeritus of Finance Fund, a longtime member of the CDFI Coalition, who was elected Board Chair on March 10. "That's where CDFIs come in—we are helping revitalize local economies by providing access to capital that traditional financial institutions cannot, with the goal of bringing these communities and their businesses into the economic mainstream."

On the second day, attendees heard from senior leaders of the CDFI Industry who recently retired or are preparing to retire. The panelists included Bob Davenport, president of the National Development Council; Julie Gould, the former president of Mercy Loan Fund; Ron Phillips, the president and founder of Coastal Enterprises, Inc.; Cliff Rosenthal, the former CEO of the National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions; and Michael Rubinger, the president and CEO of Local Initiatives Support Corporation. The panel was moderated by Donna Gambrell, the former CDFI Fund Director from 2007-2013, and the longest serving and first African American woman to be appointed to the position. The panel discussed the origins of the CDFI movement, citing many CDFIs came from the civil rights movement.

The event also included keynotes from CDFI Fund Director Annie Donovan and Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Ranking Member on the Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee and a senior member of the Finance Committee. Senator John Boozman (R-AR) and Senator Chris Coons (D-DE), respectively, Chair and Ranking Member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, also spoke at the CDFI Coalition's Capitol Hill Reception, which was held on March 9.

There are currently more than 954 certified CDFIs, including 71 Native CDFIs, working in communities across the United States. These institutions include 510 loan funds, 251 credit unions, 170 bank depository institution holding companies, banks or thrifts, and 14 venture capital funds. In 2015 CDFI Fund grantees made over 41,000 loans or investments totaling more than \$3 billion. This capital financed over 25,000 units of affordable housing, and 12,000 businesses. For more information on the Coalition and CDFIs, visit our website at www.cdfi.org.

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