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Opportunity Finance Network Announces President Bill Clinton as 2019 Conference Keynote Speaker

President Clinton will address the luncheon plenary to honor the achievements, future of the CDFI industry on the 25th anniversary of the CDFI Fund

WASHINGTON, DC (October 21, 2019) — The Opportunity Finance Network (OFN), the national association of community development financial institutions (CDFIs), will host its annual conference, *Lending Where it Counts*, in Washington, DC from October 20 - 23, 2019. President Bill Clinton will deliver the keynote address on October 21 during the luncheon plenary.

President Clinton was instrumental in the creation of the [CDFI Fund](#), a federal agency supporting the CDFI industry that ensures affordable lending to build economic opportunity in underserved rural, urban and Native communities. When first proposed 25 years ago, few believed that a model built on lending in low-income communities, leveraging federal dollars and prioritizing communities as stakeholders, would work. Early pioneers and supporters proved the resiliency of the CDFI model, demonstrating the consistently strong returns and low default rates that continue today. President Clinton played an important role in the further evolution of community development investment and financing by signing the Riegle Community Development and Regulatory Improvement Act in 1994 to create the Fund and honor a campaign promise.

A quarter century later, CDFIs leverage assets of \$185 billion to help create jobs, affordable homes, community facilities, and small businesses in rural, urban, and Native communities across the country. The building blocks of America's future, CDFIs work with local communities to create economic growth and opportunity in unlikely places often overlooked by investors and traditional lenders. With affordable lending, skills and management training, and local know-how, CDFIs operate by, with, and for communities to open doors to further growth.

In commemoration of the Fund's 25th anniversary, President Clinton will join the nation's largest gathering of CDFIs and partners to reflect on the impact of CDFIs and the future of community development finance.

"We are honored to have President Clinton join us in Washington, DC to celebrate the impact that CDFIs have had on American communities and to explore with us how we can continue to build on the strength and smarts of local communities," said **Lisa Mensah, President and CEO of OFN**. "As we continue to grapple with issues of economic opportunity that have divided our nation, we know that true community development can play a role in bringing our country together. Over the last 25 years, CDFIs have continued to prove themselves as strong financial stewards for underserved individuals and communities across the country, serving as financial first responders to level the playing field or when crisis hits—whether it be a natural disaster or an economic downturn. By



prioritizing communities and investing where others won't, CDFIs are lending where it counts across America."

A leading network of 275 CDFIs serving communities across the country, OFN is committed to promoting and advancing responsible, affordable, and transparent lending practices. For information regarding press passes for the event, please contact [Lina Page](#) and [Madeline Bronstein](#).

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About OFN

Opportunity Finance Network (OFN), the national network of community development financial institutions (CDFIs), strives to ensure low-income and other under-resourced communities have access to affordable, responsible financial products and services. Members of OFN are CDFIs that deliver responsible lending to help low-income communities join the economic mainstream. Through 2018, OFN's network originated \$74.2 billion in financing in rural, urban, and Native communities. This financing has helped to create or maintain more than 1,560,000 jobs, start or expand more than 419,177 businesses and microenterprises, and support the development or rehabilitation of 2.1 million housing units and more than 11,500 community facility projects. For more information, visit www.ofn.org.