

California credit union gains CDFI certification

By Frank Gargano

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Excite Credit Union in San Jose, California, has been certified as a community development financial institution.

The $650 million-asset Excite announced Monday that it received its CDFI certification after a 15-month application process. Under the new status, it plans to launch a micro-business lending program in October to help businesses led by people of color.

“We were concerned when our initial application was denied, but we quickly huddled and strategized on the changes necessary to meet the rigorous standards for CDFI certification,” Brian Dorcy, the credit union's CEO, said in a press release. “This certification is recognition of the good work that we are already doing. In fact, more than 60% of our lending is already directed toward lower-income consumers in our core markets in Silicon Valley and New Hanover County, North Carolina.”

Established by the Riegle Community Development and Regulatory Improvement Act of 1994, the CDFI Fund aims to offer economic opportunities to underserved people and communities by lending support to certified financial institutions via training, investments and other initiatives.

To help the credit union’s efforts in the application process, Excite partnered with CU Strategic Planning, a Tacoma, Washington-based firm that assists credit unions with the CDFI certification and grant application processes, among other business planning services.

“The team at Excite Credit Union really persevered through the CDFI certification process, and it was obvious their determination was driven by an authentic desire to help the most economically vulnerable in their community,” Carrie Ostrem, assistant vice president of certification services at CU Strategic Planning, said in the press release. “We at CU Strategic Planning were proud to work alongside the Excite Credit Union team through this certification and cannot wait to see their efforts to unlock even more opportunities for consumers who deserve their products, services and guidance.”

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