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Accessity, formerly Accion serving Southern California, is an independent, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides economic opportunity to entrepreneurs through access to small business loans and a community of support and resources.

As a Community Development Financial Institution and mission-based lender, Accessity's mission is to open doors of financial opportunity to those historically with less access to capital and business support: entrepreneurs of color, women, immigrant, and low-to-moderate income entrepreneurs, so they can build a prosperous business and livelihood for themselves and their families, while also strengthening our communities.

(619) 795-7250 | [accessity.org](https://accessity.org)



# About Accessity

## Our Loan Program Services

- ◆ Business loans ranging from \$300 to \$100,000 (start-up and expansion)
- ◆ Free business assistance
- ◆ Credit reporting and referrals to counseling services
- ◆ Access to a resource library
- ◆ Publicity/networking opportunities
- ◆ Financing within approximately two weeks

## Where We Get Our Funding

- ◆ Private donations
- ◆ Grants from foundations, companies & government
- ◆ Grants or low-interest loans from banks

## Why Microentrepreneurs Come to Us

- ◆ Small loan size
- ◆ Past credit challenges or no credit history
- ◆ Start-up business (less than two years)
- ◆ Language barriers
- ◆ Limited financial records
- ◆ Lack of collateral

## What Our Clients Use Loan Money For

- ◆ Equipment, inventory, and supplies
- ◆ Renovations and business expansion
- ◆ Basic working capital etc.

## Our Eligibility Requirements

- ◆ Work/live in Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego counties
- ◆ No bankruptcy in the past year
- ◆ Must show the capacity to repay the loan
- ◆ Must be 18 years of age
- ◆ Business must be a legal activity
- ◆ No outstanding liens or judgments
- ◆ Must have documented business income (i.e. receipts, invoices)

## Our Historical Performance\*

- ◆ Total number of loans disbursed: More than 5,450
- ◆ Total dollars disbursed: Over \$65 MM
- ◆ Low- to moderate-income and diverse-owned businesses – 89%
- ◆ Jobs created and maintained per loan – 2.5
- ◆ Repayment rate: 97%
- ◆ Business survival rate: 94% of Accessity-funded businesses remained open 2-3 years after their loan

*\*As of August 1, 2022.*



# Mission History

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## Our Mission

Accessity's mission is to open doors of financial opportunity to those historically with less access to capital and business support: entrepreneurs of color, women, immigrant, and low-to-moderate income entrepreneurs, so they can build a prosperous business and livelihood for themselves and their families, while also strengthening our communities.

## Our History

As a Community Development Financial Institution, Accessity has been dedicated to providing economic opportunity for entrepreneurs who lack access to traditional sources of credit since 1994. We've served thousands with education and resources and provided \$65 million in loans to over 5,450 clients in Southern California

In the last year, we served more small business owners than in any year in our history. In seeing the disproportionate economic impact of the pandemic on low-to-moderate income entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs of color, we knew we were being called to make a greater impact.

## COVID-19 Response

When the pandemic started heavily impacting Southern California small businesses in mid-March 2020, Accessity acted as an economic first responder to support small businesses in this time of need. During this critical time Accessity has developed a COVID-19 resources for your business webpage, educated 3,700 entrepreneurs and disbursed more than \$8.5 million in low-interest COVID-19 relief funds to nearly 300 businesses. Accessity has special low-interest loan programs designed for entrepreneurs needing support to recover from COVID-19.

## Our New Brand

Launched in 2021, the name Accessity intentionally combines the word "Access" and "ity" from the word community. It demonstrates the commitment to making a greater impact with the clients we serve, especially for entrepreneurs of color, women and immigrant entrepreneurs who often lack equitable access to loan capital and a community of support and resources. The logo represents the entrepreneurial spirit and a diverse community coming together to serve as catalysts for launching and growing businesses, as displayed in colors and design reflective of our diverse Southern California community.

At Accessity, we believe in building social equity through our lending philosophy and wrap-around approach of serving our clients with additional support and resources. We believe in meeting our clients where they are, and in putting value on the adversities they have overcome to become business owners.

## Accomplishments

Accessity has lent over \$65 million since inception in December of 1994. We have approved more than 5,450 loans while maintaining good portfolio quality.

Each year the Accessity staff provides technical assistance and business information to more than 1,500 business owners who approach the program for services. Accessity maintains a close relationship with our clients and we are proud to say we have achieved these accomplishments with a staff of 30 and support from interns and volunteers.

Accessity received the highest four-star rating from Charity Navigator for the eighth consecutive year for sound fiscal management. The rating recognizes Accessity as an exceptional nonprofit which allocates over 90 percent of its budget towards its lending program.



# The Need for Microloans

Accessity targets self-employed individuals and microbusiness owners, many of which are run by women, other minorities and people with low-to-moderate income levels. Over 70 percent of our total client base identifies themselves as part of an ethnic minority group, and approximately 40 percent of Accessity clients are women all of whom are in need of micro-credit.

The Southern California regional economy is growing at a faster rate than those of the country as a whole, yet most of the jobs with the most growth in California (fast food, retail services, grocery, health care, janitorial and security industries) pay less than a livable wage. Struggling to adjust to the competitive global economy, many employers are shifting to part-time workers, non-standard schedules, contract labor, suburban worksites (which there is minimal or no public transportation) and fewer employee benefits. Faced with this wage situation and cost of living (which is 41% higher than the national average) many low-to-moderate income persons are turning to self-employment as an alternative.

Cumulatively, microenterprises employ thousands of people, feed and educate their families and sustain the vital informal economic infrastructure of Southern California's older urban neighborhoods. These enterprises are owned and operated by hardworking men and women whose ethnic and cultural backgrounds reflect the community's rich diversity. Accessity's clients may be seamstresses, daycare providers, carpenters or hairdressers, all working hard to earn an income that will help them build a better future.

Even for these determined microentrepreneurs, opportunity is limited by the difficulty of accessing business credit and technical assistance. Obtaining a loan from a bank is almost impossible for a variety of reasons such as small loan size, poor or no credit history, language barriers and limited financial records. Without access to working capital, micro-entrepreneurs have little chance of strengthening or expanding their small businesses.

In order to maintain and grow their microbusinesses, Accessity borrowers often need very small loans to acquire basic working capital, to make improvements to their workspaces, to purchase equipment, and/or to buy inventory in bulk quantities. Once these microentrepreneurs have better established their business, many are able to receive larger loans from traditional loan sources such as banks and credit unions.

We also encourage our microentrepreneurs to improve their business acumen. As their businesses grow, and eventually require larger amounts of capital from mainstream financial institutions, they will need to develop the formalized financial records and management skills required by these lenders. To assist our clients in this area, Accessity also provides technical assistance. Utilizing staff members and partnerships with community organizations, Accessity hosts regular workshops and training, as well as offers in-house business counseling.



# Methodology

Accessity has developed a lending methodology that enables underserved entrepreneurs to access credit, while maintaining a high quality loan portfolio. The program's "character-based" lending methodology takes into account the borrower's integrity, reliability, and entrepreneurial spirit when evaluating loan applications. The program prides itself on being accessible and on providing capital quickly. Accessity's loan committee meets on a weekly basis to review and process completed loan applications.

## Stepped Loan Amounts

Accessity provides business loans from \$300 to \$100,000. These microloans enable many low-to-moderate income borrowers to receive the credit they need to build their business and family incomes, while maintaining a manageable risk level and reasonable payment schedule.

## Collateral Requirements

Accessity's flexible collateral requirements make credit accessible even to clients with few business and personal assets. Accessity accepts non-traditional forms of collateral such as automobiles, equipment, and other business inventory.

## Co-Signer Requirements

All loans are evaluated on a case-by-case basis with co-signers required depending on the level of risk.

## Pricing

Accessity's pricing structure, which includes incentives for timely repayment, takes into account market interest rates, our costs of lending, and our goal of reaching program self-sufficiency. Interest rates are fixed and range from 6.99% to 18.99% depending upon the client's risk level. Special pricing is also offered to veterans and active service members. Accessity also offers low-interest various COVID-19 relief and recovery programs.

## Terms

Loans terms vary from 3-to-72 months with equal monthly payments. As loan amounts increase, the loan term increases, enabling borrowers to maintain reasonable monthly payments as they move to larger loan amounts. Borrowers are also permitted to prepay their loan balance without penalty at any time after the first three months of payment.

## Business Training

Accessity's clients are often quite accomplished in their specific industry, but may lack the necessary expertise for business management and growth. They may be excellent childcare providers or skilled contractors, for example, but do not have training in basic financial reporting. Accessity has found that the most effective way to help borrowers develop their business skills is to offer individualized training on an as-needed basis by our staff, volunteers or partner organizations. All of our incoming clients receive basic technical assistance from loan officers during the intake process, in addition to our partner SBDC counselor. If clients require additional assistance during the intake process, we refer them to partner organizations who specifically offer assistance in marketing, business planning, government contracting, manufacturing, accounting and e-business. Accessity hosts and facilitates business workshops regularly for clients on educational topics and offers opportunities for publicity and networking.





# Awards & Recognition

\*Prior to 2021, Accessity was known as Accion serving Southern California and/or Accion San Diego.

**2020 Financial Services Champion of the Year:** Presented during Small Business Week, Accessity Chief Credit & Operating Officer Robert Lopez won this prestigious award for the organization for the second time. Hosted by the Small Business Administration, the North San Diego SBDC nominated Robert for his dedication to excellence in lending for small businesses.

**2018 SBA Lender Award:** Advocacy Award for Small Business Outreach Efforts, Training and Lending Assistance to Underserved Communities

**Four-Star Charity Navigator Award 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017:** Accessity received the highest 4-star rating for sound and fiscal management from Charity Navigator. The rating recognizes Accessity as an exceptional non-profit which allocates over 90% of its organizational budget towards the microlending program, ranking the organization highest among its peers in efficiency and capacity.

**2016 Financial Services Champion of the Year:** Presented during Small Business Week, Accessity CEO Elizabeth Schott won this prestigious award for the organization. Hosted by the Small Business Administration, the North San Diego SBDC nominated Elizabeth for her dedication to excellence in lending for small businesses.

**2016 CDFI Award:** Accessity was awarded a \$1 million grant from the U.S Department of Treasury's Community Development Financial Institution Fund (CDFI). This was the largest CDFI Fund grant that the organization has ever received, having been awarded \$888,000 in 2013. It was also the single largest financial contribution received in the organization's 21-year history.

**2015 Best Alternative Lender by Business News Daily:** Business News Daily vetted dozens of lenders in the United States as chose Accessity as the best alternative lender. They chose based on Accessity's ability to provide the best customer experience.

**2013 San Diego Entrepreneur Day E-Wards The Problem Solver Award:** Accessity was awarded "The Problem Solver" award at the 2013 San Diego Entrepreneur Day E-wards Ceremony that highlights standout entrepreneurs and small businesses from 15 categories.

**2013 Dealmaker of the Year Award:** Point Loma Nazarene University honored Accessity as an organization that exemplifies creativity, innovation and ethical practices, creating long-term value for the San Diego business community.

**2012 Advance San Diego Fast Pitch Contest Winner:** Accessity placed third place and was awarded a \$5,000 cash prize, plus in-kind services, from the event hosted by Social Venture Partners in November 2013. Accessity was selected among 80 local nonprofits as a top 10 finalist to deliver a three minute pitch on its mission to a panel of judges and 350-person audience.

**2012 CDFI Award:** Accessity was awarded a \$600,000 grant from the U.S Department of Treasury's Community Development Financial Institution Fund (CDFI). This was the second year in a row Accessity received a grant of this size.

**2011 CNN Money Top 10 Microfinance Companies:** Accessity was recognized as one of the "Top 10 Microfinance Companies" by CNN Money based on the number of loans it disbursed, and data compiled by the Aspen Institute.



# Awards & Recognition cont'd

**CA Economic Development Lending Initiative (CEDLI) and CA Resources and Training (CARAT) Outstanding Performance in Community Development Lending Award:** Accessity was recognized for its impactful work in supporting small businesses in San Diego County with access to capital through its microloan program as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). The award was presented at the Annual CEDLI/CARAT luncheon on Oct. 12, 2010 at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles.

**Urban League of San Diego County's 2010 President's Small Business Award:** Accessity was presented this award at the Annual Equal Opportunity Day Diversity Summit and Awards Luncheon on Wednesday, October 13, 2010, at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront. The President's Small Business Award is given to an organization that has made a significant contribution to the community, in one of the five programmatic thrusts of our Urban League Movement, significantly impacts and/or promotes diversity initiatives in its business.

**2009 Innovation in Technical Assistance (TA) Performance and Service Award:** Accessity's Executive Director, Elizabeth Schott, was presented this award for her demonstrated outstanding performance as a participant in CARAT's 2008-2009 TACP Executive Institute trainings, and for the service Accessity has provided to the economic development community.

**2009 California Association for Micro Enterprise Opportunity (CAMEO) "Job Generator" Award:** Accessity's Executive Director, Elizabeth Schott, was presented this award for her assistance to the San Diego community in guiding microentrepreneurs with the expansion of their businesses to create jobs in San Diego. In 2008, Accessity generated and/or maintained over 900 employment opportunities in the San Diego area. State Senator Christine Kehoe presented Schott with the CAMEO award at the annual meeting in Sacramento.

**2009 Small Business Administration Community Service Award:** Accessity was named the recipient of this award, recognizing the organization for exemplary service and extraordinary assistance, as a micro-lender, instrumental in the growth and success of San Diego small business and economic development.

**2008 Community Investment Leader of the Year:** Accessity was presented with the award by The San Diego County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (SDCHCC) during the Iluminada Gala in April 2008. The award recognizes a financial institution that shows leadership and commitment to community advancement, support and presence in the historically underrepresented communities.

**Comerica Revolving Grant Fund of \$250,000:** In September, Comerica Bank announced Accessity as the recipient of a \$250,000 revolving grant fund. The grant will be used to support the microlending program, giving Accessity funds to provide more small business loans to hard working microentrepreneurs. We are happy to have Comerica Bank as a community partner and we want to extend our appreciation for their continuous support of our program.

**Multicultural Heritage Award Finalist:** San Diego Business Journal 2005 – These organizations were recognized for their commitment to diversity in the workplace and community. Accessity was one of 50 finalists.

**Neighborhood Builders Award – Bank of America 2004:** From 30 markets nationwide and 2,500 applicants, Bank of America awarded 60 grants to two non-profit organizations in each market who work to promote vibrant neighborhoods and contribute to distressed communities.



# Awards & Recognition cont'd

Accessity was honored as one of the two recipients in San Diego of the \$200,000 multi-year grant, as well as leadership training for senior staff members. Accessity is using this money to expand outreach efforts, update technology and leverage partnerships in the community.

**Strategic Partner Award – Citibank 2004:** This award was given to Accessity to recognize the strategic partnership with Citibank and their continuing support for Accessity's mission and lending program.

**Top 25 “Social Capitalists” Award – Fast Company Magazine, January 2006:** For the third year running, Accessity's pioneering role in microfinance was recognized for generating tangible results in fighting poverty by bringing a full range of financial services to the poor. The Fast Company/Monitor Social Capitalist Awards are the first of their kind - quantitatively measuring a group's innovation and social impact, as well as the viability and sustainability of its business model. Mark Vamos, editor of Fast Company, commended Accessity's work, “We applaud the efforts and business acumen of Accessity which, well beyond its dedication to scalable solutions for poverty alleviation, us a business-oriented organization of vision worthy of imitation in both the non-profit and for-profit sectors.”

**America's Top 100 Philanthropies – Worth Magazine, December 2001:** Accessity was named one of the nation's top charitable institutions in the December 2001 issue of Worth Magazine. Worth's “America's 100 Best Charities” list was chosen from over 800,000 nonprofit organizations in the country and is based on six months of research into financial statements, mission fulfillment and impact evaluations. Accessity was one of 21 organizations listed in the “Relief and Development” category.





# Meet Our Clients

## Mende's Groom Room, El Centro, CA

Mende Cardona has more than 20 years of cosmetology experience. After the beauty salon where Mende was working closed, she had to make an important decision on where her career would go next. Mende has always been an animal lover, so she began working at a local pet store grooming dogs. She worked as a groomer for over six years, and she built up a steady client base in the Valley.

At the end of last year, Mende felt the time was right to venture out on her own to open a storefront location in El Centro, Calif. Mende came to Accessity looking for a loan to cover startup costs such as permits and equipment, so that she could open her new business: Mende's Groom Room. She has been open for a few months and business is booming! She has been able to hire one part-time employee with plans to hire more staff in the coming months.

"I have always wanted to be an entrepreneur," stated Mende. "I came to Accessity with a dream to work with animals and Accessity helped me realize that this dream was possible. Now, I own a business I can be proud of and I can be a part of the revitalization of the Valley."



## Chula Vista Brewery, Chula Vista CA

The craft beer scene was booming in San Diego but didn't have a presence in San Diego's South Bay area where Timothy Parker lives. Timothy decided to use his passion for brewing and community to open Chula Vista Brewery in Chula Vista, Calif. in 2017 as a community gathering place and to give representation to Southern San Diego in the local craft beer industry but needed additional capital to do so. Accessity was able to help Timothy with a \$10,000 BTAD in July 2015 to cover the cost of furnishings as he was working on getting his business started. The community response was immediate – people were happy to have a local tasting room to come to.



Since receiving his loan, Timothy has continued to grow Chula Vista Brewery and the business has made a name for itself in the San Diego beer community and took home a bronze medal in the San Diego International Beer Competition in 2019. His revenue has increased every year, and he plans to expand to a second location soon. He has used his success and platform to become even more involved in the community. Chula Vista Brewery and their employees hold events and volunteer with the local police and fire departments, as well as doing events with the mayor. Timothy attributes much of his recent success to the Samuel Adams Brewing the American Dream Brewing & Business Experienceship he participated in in 2018, which helped him and his team garner additional education and training as well as participate in large industry events such as the Great American Beer Festival.

# Leadership Team Bios

## Elizabeth Schott, CEO



In 2004, Ms. Schott joined Accessity, formerly Accion serving Southern California, a nonprofit microlending organization based in San Diego that serves small businesses with educational resources and access to capital ranging from \$300 to \$100,000. As CEO, she is currently responsible for overall strategic developmental and operational areas of the organization, in addition to board development, human resources, and fundraising. She brings over 15 years of project and organizational development, strategic marketing and public relations experience to the organization. When she first joined the Accessity team, she worked as marketing coordinator and director of operations until taking leadership in early 2008. Prior to Accessity, Ms. Schott worked with various public relations, marketing and event firms where she managed client portfolios, project development and communication efforts for primarily small businesses and non-profit organizations.

## Robert Lopez, Chief Credit & Operating Officer



Mr. Lopez re-joined Accessity in July of 2018 after previously working for the organization from 2008 to 2014 and is responsible for lending staff supervision and training, program development, underwriting, loan portfolio quality, compliance management, loss mitigation and recovery, and operational efficiency. Lopez received a B.A. in Urban Studies, with an emphasis in Public Administration from San Diego State University and has a Masters of Public Administration Program from SDSU. He has 14 years' experience in small business banking and lending and is bilingual in English and Spanish. Prior employment includes work with VEDC as their Chief Operating Officer, Dealstruck as their Servicing Director where he oversaw client services and portfolio risk management, Union Bank of California, California Coast Credit Union, Coast Central Credit Union, & Fannie Mae. Lopez was awarded the 2013 Community Service SBA Award and the 2020 Financial Services Champion of the Year award from the SBA.

## Javier Islas, Chief Financial Officer



Javier is responsible for all finance and accounting functions of the organization and joined Accessity in January 2010. He has extensive experience in accounting and auditing. His audit background specifically includes federal financial management requirements having participated in the audits of the federal departments of labor & energy. His accounting background includes experience in for-profit and non-profit government contract organizations. He has a Bachelor's Degree from San Diego State University and is bilingual in English and Spanish.

## Valery Belloso, Director of Strategic Initiatives



Valery is the Director of Strategic Initiatives at Accessity. Valery has worked at Accessity since January 2006 in various capacities and joined the management team in 2015. In her current role, she is instrumental in leading the organization's business development strategy, managing key partnerships, overseeing strategic organizational projects and ensuring programmatic goals are being met effectively. She holds a Bachelor's in Business Administration from the University of San Diego and a Masters in Spanish Language and Literature from San Diego State University.

# Meet Our Board of Directors

**Gordon Boerner – Board Chair**  
**Senior Vice President**  
Regional Banking Manager, West U.S. Region  
U.S. Bank Private Wealth Management

**Mark Emch –Vice-Chair**  
Previous Senior VP & CFO (Retired)  
San Diego Convention Center Corporation

**Stacey Kartchner- Board Secretary**  
Attorney at Law

**Sean Carpenter**  
Consultant

**William D. Lynch**  
The William D. Lynch Foundation

**Lydia Huard**  
San Diego Market Manager  
Wells Fargo Home Mortgage

**Joon Han**  
Specialist  
Better San Diego

**Stacie East**  
Entomological Society of America

**Victor Nava**  
Director of Development  
SDSU Imperial Valley

**Maria Kunac**  
Executive VP, Chief Lending Officer  
Silvergate Bank

**Stephen Friedman**  
Sr. EVP / Regional President  
Pacific Premier Bank

**Chikako Tyler**  
EVP/CFO  
California Bank & Trust

**Alex Rodriguez**  
SVP, Business Relationship Manager  
First Choice Bank

**Victor A. Vilaplana**  
Attorney at Law  
Foley & Lardner LLP

**Gene Louie**  
Retired Finance Professional; Retired CPA

**Carlos Muñoz**  
Vice President, Portfolio Manager Team Lead, U.S. Bank

**Michael Fletcher**  
Vice President – CA | Business Banking Center Manager II, Comerica

