A desert landscape at sunset. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds, transitioning from a deep blue at the top to a warm orange and yellow near the horizon. In the foreground, several tall saguaro cacti are silhouetted against the bright light of the setting sun. The background shows a range of dark, rolling mountains under the twilight sky.

GROWTH PARTNERS ARIZONA

2023

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



To our founders, investors, stakeholders, partners, borrowers, board members, team, and the entire Southern Arizona community I want to say thank you for assisting in laying the foundation that has allowed us to arrive at this pivotal moment. Over the last decade Growth Partners Arizona, has focused on building strong relationships and delivering on our commitments to deploy responsible capital to those who need it most. As we enter a new year we do so with a high level of energy, passion, and commitment to become a statewide resource for nonprofits and small businesses in Arizona.

The next 18-24 months will be critical for us, as we focus on building a more inclusive economy. We believe that an inclusive economy is one that serves the needs of all people by creating pathways into the financial system for traditionally underserved populations including those who live in rural and Tribal communities. This will require us to forge strong relationships with local city officials, organizations, and community leaders to ensure we are intentional in how we support the needs of our communities.

We will focus on working with trusted community partners to help our borrowers receive the technical assistance needed to get capital ready. We will create strong relationships with our local financial institutions to establish pathways for borrowers to become bankable. We will establish innovative approaches to provide alternative lending solutions to ensure our small business owners are not falling victim to predatory lending. And finally, we'll focus on working closely with organizations who are committed to closing the racial wealth gap and improving economic outcomes for Arizona.

Our focus is clear, and our team is ready to do the work. We invite you to read and share this resource as it will provide insight into our plan to become a statewide resource for our local small businesses and nonprofits.

We look forward building and working with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andre T. Whittington".

Andre T. Whittington
Executive Director

OUR IMPACT

"They are an invaluable partner, providing coaching and sharing financial expertise — as well as capital — to help us through a period of exciting growth."

YWCA of Southern Arizona

\$6,136,500.00

In loans deployed to local nonprofit organizations and small businesses across all loan programs

90%

Of our Borrowers Are Located in Low-income Communities

57%

Of our borrowers are minorities

\$370,000

In loans deployed through our KIVA Tucson HUB

GROWTH PARTNERS ARIZONA

2023

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Over the next 18 months we will focus on expanding our impact across the state of Arizona with an initial focus area of Central and North Central Arizona. Our goal is to complete our expansion by the end of 2024 and have established partnerships across all regions within the state. The following priorities will assist us in scaling intentionally, strategically align our efforts, and assist in building a more inclusive economy for all.

**PRIORITY
ONE**

Grow Intentionally Through Partnerships and Collaborations

- Statewide Expansion
- Formalize GPAz Ecosystem
- Develop Capital Readiness Model

**PRIORITY
TWO**

Launch Growth Lending Model

- Expand Microlending Programs
- Create More Inclusive Underwriting Practices
- Improve the Borrower Experience
- Rural Capital Deployment
- Strengthen Financial Pathways for the Underserved

**PRIORITY
THREE**

Strengthen Outcomes & Amplify Impacts

- Improve Data Collection Process
- Cultivate Collective Storytelling
- Facilitate Statewide Financial Inclusion
- Strengthen Organizational Capabilities

01 Grow Intentionally Through Collaboration & Partnerships

Statewide Expansion

We will launch a 24-month expansion strategy with an end-goal of establishing formal relationships across the entire state by the end of 2024. Our initial focus will be to secure partnerships in central and north central Arizona through the end of 2023. We will then replicate this model of growth as we scale to northern Arizona and remaining counties. We strongly believe that building an inclusive economy will require us to identify anchor organizations within rural, urban, and Tribal communities. This will ensure our model is sustainable and effective, allowing us to grow our trust and credibility with intention.

Growth Plan

Southern Arizona
Established Presence

Central/North Central Arizona
2023

Northern/West Arizona
2024

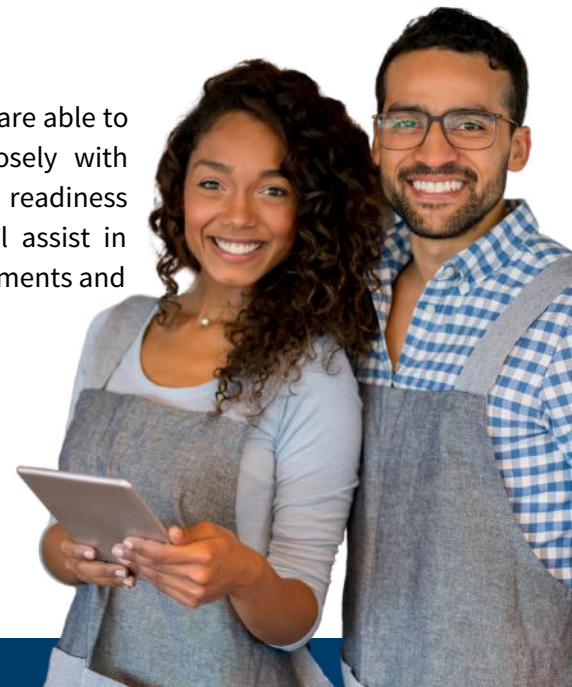


Formalize GPaz Ecosystem

As we scale across the state, creating a formal ecosystem will be critical to ensure we are leveraging relationships effectively. Establishing formal community partners will assist in creating warm hand-offs during the capital readiness process and improve the experience of our borrowers. Our collaborating partners will work closely with our executive leadership team in providing guidance, assistance, and resources to support innovation and growth. As we grow it will be critical to identify local, regional, and national investment partners who will support this growth by investing long-term capital to support loan program expansion efforts.

Deploy Capital Readiness Model

Our capital readiness model will ensure small businesses and nonprofits are able to secure the capital needed to achieve their goals. We will work closely with community partners to provide financial education and capital readiness workshops for nonprofits and small business owners. This model will assist in raising awareness of our lending, educate local lenders on capital requirements and ensure borrowers understand how to effectively deploy capital once it is received. Our capital readiness model will include on-demand learning modules that will be made available to everyone at no cost in late 2024. These modules will allow us to continue to educate small business owners on what it means to get and stay capital ready as well include financial education series for small business owners.



02 Launch Growth Lending Model

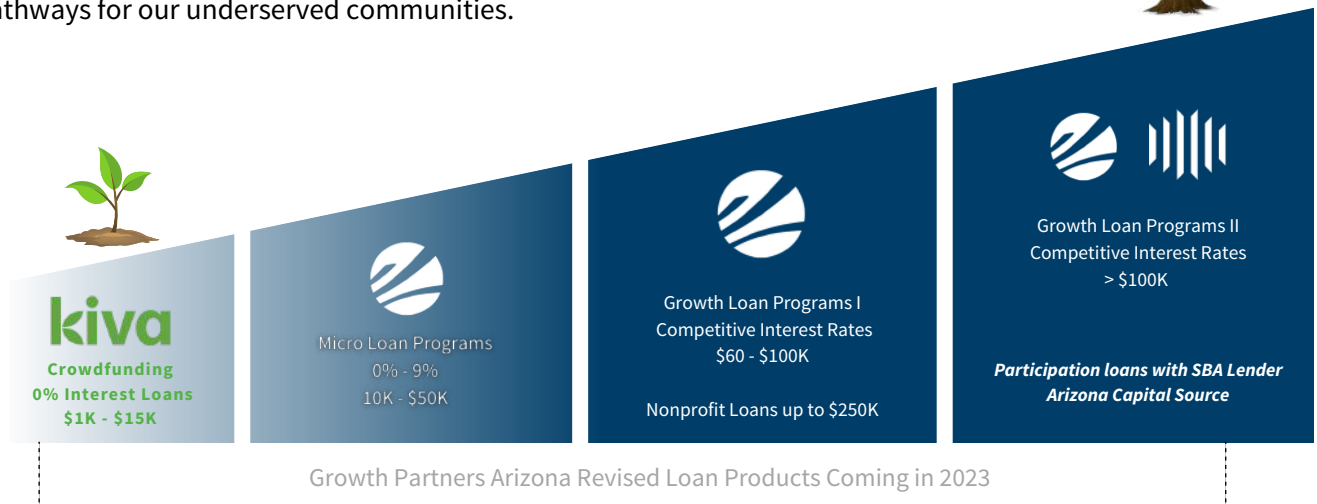
Expand Microlending

We recognize that formal microlending programs are needed across the state and while programs have been established to support this need, over the years some have fallen short. Our focus over the next 24 months is to better understand local microlending needs of our most underserved communities. Through partnerships and collaborations we plan to launch intentional microlending products that will focus on optimizing the borrower's experience, minimize aggregated risk, and create faster underwriting processes. These products will focus on offering unsecured microloans that will go beyond numbers and projections. We also recognize that in order to build a sustainable microlending program it will require us to build partnerships with Technical Assistance providers across the state. This will ensure our borrowers are able to receive the support they need throughout the lending process, allow us to build with trusted partners, and ensure we have adequate representation from the communities we are serving.

Meeting Our Borrowers Where They Are

As we expand our lending products we will do so focusing on a few key components. We will focus on creating more inclusive underwriting practices. This will be done by implementing community-based and impact-based lending products to support more non-traditional borrowers. We have made enhancements and will continue to focus on improving the borrower experience through technology and addressing the digital divide. Shifting our focus to partner more with Technical Assistance providers so that we can spend more of our time improving the financial health of small businesses. This will ensure we are impacting local businesses more effectively and optimizing our space with local ecosystems. Through our partnerships with the Alliance for Nonprofits we are able to provide technical assistance support to nonprofit organizations, furthering our commitment to align our efforts to the needs of the community. We also plan to embark on an extensive rural capital development campaign to support the needs of our rural communities. This will include road shows, listening sessions, and attending local events to connect with leaders and small business owners.

Finally, we will establish partnerships and work closely with organizations like the Credit Builders Alliance to ensure we are helping our borrowers understand and improve their credit. We believe that through these efforts we will be able to strengthen financial pathways for our underserved communities.



03 Strengthen Outcomes & Amplify Impact

As we scale across the state having strong data collection, data management, and reporting practices will be critical in raising awareness of our efforts/impacts. We will work closely with our partners and collaborators to ensure we are capturing all required data points and sharing our impact through a collective voice.

We will improve our data collection process using innovative software to assist in streamlining these process. This will include automating the loan application process, launching a small business referral portal for our partners, and sharing quarterly/annual reports. Cultivating a collective storytelling model will support the amplification of this critical work. We will work closely with partners within the respective communities to align our voice and messaging. We believe that through these efforts we will be able to foster strong connections and build credibility across the state.

A major component to our commitment is to assist in facilitating statewide financial inclusion. This will require us to become actively involved in the work and efforts that will impact policy changes, improve outcomes, and contribute to solutions. It will require us to improve our organizational capabilities through training, education, and awareness. We have started to make progress towards this by participating in the Path 15|55 Underwriting for Racial Justice program. As participants in this program we have joined several CDFIs from across the U.S. to embed and integrate changes within our organizational processes, procedures and way of operating.

Over the next 18 months we will be defining key performance indicators that will be used to measure outcomes, impact, and opportunities across the state.

These strategic priorities have been establish to ensure we are aligning our efforts with the commitments we have made to our community, stakeholders, borrowers, and partners. We are excited to continue our work and grow relationships with organizations, institutions, foundations, leaders, and the Arizona community. While we understand that we will face significant challenges on the road ahead, we are confident that we will overcome them together and build upon the resiliency of our communities.

We Look Forward to Growing with You!



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Certified Economic Developer

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Arizona Capital Source

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Gilbert Davidson

Town Manager
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Judie Scalise

Founder & Principle
ESI Corporation

Roxanne Veliz

Partner
Snell & Wilmer

Magdalena Verdugo

Chief Executive Officer
YWCA Southern Arizona

The work of Growth Partners Arizona is also sustained by the support of community leaders have assisted us as committee members over the years.

Thank you to those who have and will continue to support our work.



GROW WITH US

Dreams are universal. Opportunity is not. We are committed to building a more inclusive economy, working collaboratively to solve the most complex needs of our communities, and doing the work required move forward.

Contact Us

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www.growthpartnersaz.org

