



## **First Women's Bank Announces New Mission Partners to Help Close the Gender Gap in Access to Capital**

*Team welcomes Wes Felix, Co-Founder and CEO of Saysh, as new Strategic Advisor*

**CHICAGO — March 8, 2024** — First Women's Bank (FWB) announced today that Ariel Investments, TransUnion, and Lenders Cooperative have joined its growing roster of Mission Partners, committed to closing the gender gap in access to capital for small businesses.

These new partners join established Mission Partners including Airbnb, Aon, BCG, Comcast, Microsoft, Principal Financial, Salesforce, United Airlines, Wendy's, and William Blair, demonstrating a collective commitment to fostering an inclusive economy.

FWB also welcomes Wes Felix, Co-Founder and CEO of Saysh, as a Strategic Advisor. A strong advocate for women-owned businesses, Felix's insights will be invaluable to FWB's mission.

"I am deeply honored to partner with First Women's Bank, a pioneering institution that stands at the forefront of empowering women in business," said Felix. "This partnership symbolizes more than just an advisory position; it represents a commitment to allyship and the significant impact we can make together in supporting women and providing equal access to capital."

"Closing the gender lending gap is a critical step toward achieving gender equality, and First Women's Bank is the bank to do it," said Marianne Markowitz, President and CEO, First Women's Bank. "Together with our Strategic Advisors and Mission Partners, First Women's Bank will help bridge that gap, elevate small businesses, and promote a more inclusive economy."

FWB's unique ability to combine national SBA (Small Business Administration) and conventional lending with deposits from mission-aligned individuals, corporations and organizations helps to create accessible financing for small businesses with a strategic focus on the women's economy. The support of FWB's Mission Partners helps expand economic opportunity for small businesses.

### **Quotes from Mission Partners**

**Carlos Calderon, Chief Financial Officer, Ariel Investments:** "At Ariel Investments, diversity is not aspirational, it is foundational. We are pleased to support First Women's Bank, which shares our mission to close the wealth gap."

**Heather Russell, Executive Vice President and Chief Legal Officer, TransUnion:** "TransUnion is committed to gender equity in business and strives to increase the percentage of women in leadership at our company each year. Becoming a Mission Partner with FWB and helping more women secure funding to open their own businesses is one more way we are advancing the role of women in commerce."

**Ben Wallace, Principal, Lenders Cooperative:** "Lenders Cooperative is proud to join forces with First Women's Bank as a small business and SBA lending partner, as well as through a mission deposit. Together, we are committed to supporting and empowering women and women-owned businesses by providing much needed lending capital to foster economic and community growth."

**About First Women's Bank**

First Women's Bank is the only women-founded, women-owned and women-led commercial bank in the country on a mission to grow the economy and elevate the role of women within it. The Bank serves a national lending and deposit market from its flagship location in Chicago. FWBank is a Member FDIC and Equal Housing Lender. For more information, visit [www.FirstWomens.Bank](http://www.FirstWomens.Bank).

**About Ariel Investments**

Ariel Investments, LLC is a global value-oriented asset management firm founded in 1983. Ariel is headquartered in Chicago, with offices in New York City, San Francisco, and Sydney. As of December 31, 2023, Ariel's firm-wide assets under management totaled approximately \$14.9 billion, which includes assets from Ariel Alternatives. Ariel serves individual and institutional investors through no-load mutual funds, collective investment trusts, private funds, and separate account strategies. For more information, please visit [www.arielinvestments.com](http://www.arielinvestments.com).

**About TransUnion**

TransUnion is a global information and insights company with over 13,000 associates operating in more than 30 countries. We make trust possible by ensuring each person is reliably represented in the marketplace. We do this with a Tru™ picture of each person: an actionable view of consumers, stewarded with care. Through our acquisitions and technology investments we have developed innovative solutions that extend beyond our strong foundation in core credit into areas such as marketing, fraud, risk and advanced analytics. As a result, consumers and businesses can transact with confidence and achieve great things. We call this Information for Good®—and it leads to economic opportunity, great experiences and personal empowerment for millions of people around the world. <http://www.transunion.com/business>

**About Lenders Cooperative**

Lenders Cooperative, a subsidiary of STG, provides a variety of loan solutions and shared services for banks, credit unions, fintech, and the federal government. Lenders Cooperative specializes in providing SBA and commercial loan technology using a cloud-based loan origination platform. Lenders Cooperative and its parent STG gained notoriety through the pandemic as they provided the technology for the PPP lending program for the SBA and United States Treasury.

**For more information, press only:**

First Women's Bank Media Relations, [media@FirstWomens.Bank](mailto:media@FirstWomens.Bank)

###