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For Immediate Release

CARS LAUNCHES AS INDEPENDENT INFORMATION SERVICE

Newly-minted organization spun off from Opportunity Finance Network will provide new products and services offering in-depth CDFI industry intelligence

Philadelphia, PA, January 31, 2012—Responding to the growing need for enhanced CDFI industry intelligence, The CDFI Assessment and Ratings System (CARS) is now operating as an independent organization as of January 2012. This new information service will provide community development financial institution (CDFI) industry intelligence to impact-motivated investors, CDFIs, and other audiences through its successful core ratings product, as well as expanded products and assessment services. This launch underscores the increasing importance of CDFIs, which finance community businesses—small businesses, microenterprises, nonprofit organizations, commercial real estate developers, and affordable housing developers—in low-income communities.

“As interest in CDFI loan funds continues to grow, more investors are searching for ways to understand the social impact and financial performance of these institutions,” said Paige Chapel, President and CEO, CARS. “Our goal in establishing CARS as an independent information service is to open doors to new capital for CDFIs by leveraging our expertise, reputation, and capacity through expanded products and services for new investors. Ultimately our goal is to increase the flow of capital benefitting low-income people and communities.”

In 2012, CARS will launch new products and services making it the only independent organization that offers in-depth insight into CDFI impact and financial performance. Its new products and services include:

1. **Customized analytic services** on impact performance, asset management capabilities, and other aspects of financial performance and risk of CDFI loan funds and other community development institutions
2. **Specialized financial trend analyses** tied to investor-defined benchmarks and derived from CARS’ extensive database of CDFI financial and impact data
3. **Training and webinars** for investors on underwriting CDFI loan funds
4. **Subscription to CARS ratings for CDFIs** that seek information on best practices among peer organizations to help improve their business

These offerings will complement existing CARS products: CARS core ratings service, a rigorous third-party assessment of a CDFI’s impact performance and financial strength; and CARS Select, a subscription-based service that allows CDFIs to share their ratings with specific investors. Since the launch of its ratings product in 2004, CARS has provided 300 ratings opinions and reports for

69 institutions through the end of 2011. CARS-rated institutions manage almost half of on-balance-sheet assets among CDFI Fund-certified loan funds.

The Board overseeing the launch of the new information services represents a diverse group of CDFI, financial, and policy industry experts, including:

- Phil Baldwin, CEO, CredAbility (Atlanta, GA)
- Andy Cooney (Treasurer) Managing Director, FalconBridge Capital Markets (Charlotte, NC)
- Marten Leijon, CEO, Microfinance Information Exchange (Washington, DC)
- Mark Pinsky, (Chair,) CEO, Opportunity Finance Network (Philadelphia, PA)
- Randy Rice, Community Investment Manager, Trillium Asset Management (Boston, MA)
- Doug Raymond, Partner, Drinker Biddle & Reath (Philadelphia, PA)
- Ellen Seidman, Visiting Scholar with the Community Development Department of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, and Research Fellow at the Filene Research Institute (Washington, DC)
- Christa Velasquez, Senior Fellow, Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations at Harvard University (Cambridge, MA)

In 2013, CARS plans to launch additional analytic tools that will enable investors to further refine their portfolios by confidently assessing and identifying areas of the CDFI industry and individual CDFIs in which to invest, which will, in turn, attract more capital to the CDFI industry.

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About CARS

The CDFI Assessment and Ratings System, Inc. (CARS) was established in 2004 as a project of Opportunity Finance Network. Launched in 2012 as an independent organization, it is the only information service offering insightful, comprehensive CDFI industry intelligence to socially-motivated investors and CDFIs committed to continuous improvement and expanded social impact. CARS services include: CDFI assessment reports and ratings; customized analytic services and financial trend analyses; and training for investors on underwriting. <http://www.carsratingsystem.net>