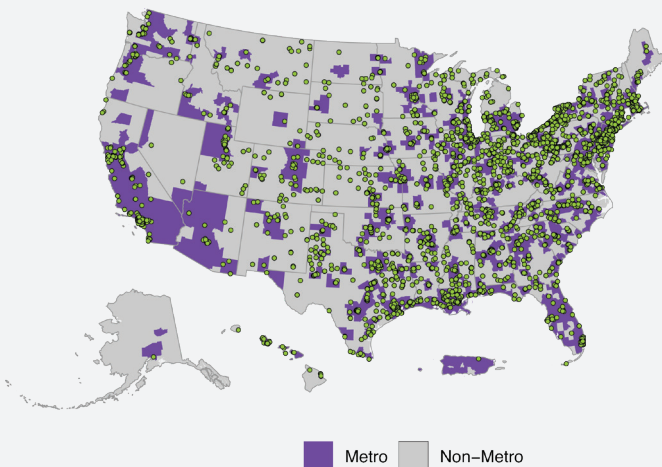


SMALL CREDIT UNIONS HELP COMMUNITIES THRIVE

Small credit unions (\$100 million or less in assets) meet the unique financial needs of their communities through tailored products, individualized financial counseling, and the trust they build through dedicated outreach and deep local roots.

The US economy is powered by 2,681 small credit unions, making up 60% of all credit unions. Together, they serve 7.5 million members across the country and achieve impact through \$41 billion in active loans to members, including:

- **\$14 billion** in community mortgage lending
- **\$22 billion** in local consumer financing
- **\$1 billion** in lending to local businesses
- **\$4 billion** in affordable small dollar loans and alternatives to predatory payday loans



US Small Credit Union Branches

Many of these credit unions specialize in serving low-income communities, as small credit unions make up 57% of all low-income designated credit unions and 37% of all Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) credit unions. Many of them are also located in financial deserts—rural, suburban, or urban areas where larger institutions have left. With 39% of financial deserts lacking reliable broadband access, online banking remains out of reach for many—underscoring the importance of local credit unions in serving these communities.

However, more than one in five small credit unions has closed or merged in the last five years. Together, these credit unions served nearly 1.4 million members. This trend underscores the importance of protecting and strengthening the small credit unions that remain as local lifelines to financial security.



64%
of all CUs



57%
of all Low-Income-Designated CUs



37%
of all CDFI-certified CUs

FOGCE FCU: Building Community Trust and Accountability

At only \$1.86 million in assets, Federation of Greene County Employees (FOGCE) FCU plays an outsized role in their rural Alabama community, serving more than 12% of the local population. Though Greene County is one of the most impoverished counties in the nation, FOGCE helps make life more affordable for their members through low-cost financing and savings opportunities.

High-cost, fringe financial services such as payday lending are disproportionately concentrated in low-income areas like Greene County, where they can exploit financial difficulty. However, FOGCE FCU was able to drive out the payday lender operating in their county, because community members recognized and spread word that the credit union was the far better choice.

As community organizers, FOGCE staff know what resonates with their members, and they remind members that the money they're borrowing is from the community and comes from their neighbor's savings. This ethos has served both the credit union and the

community well, keeping their delinquency rates below one percent despite Greene County's high rates of poverty.

As a result, FOGCE excels in both impact and financial performance, doing 99.77% of their lending in CDFI target markets while continuing to grow in asset size and membership. Credit unions like FOGCE FCU demonstrate why these “hyper-local” financial institutions serve as the best—or often, the only—real choice for low-income individuals and families in their community.

