

**YWCA IS ON  
A MISSION**

eliminating racism  
empowering women  
**ywca**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**YWCA LOWER CAPE FEAR, CAROLINA SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FUND LAUNCH COASTAL  
WOMEN'S VENTURES PROGRAM**

**WILMINGTON, N.C.**-- The YWCA Lower Cape Fear is proud to announce the unveiling of a new business development initiative, Coastal Women's Ventures, created in partnership with Carolina Small Business Development Fund. Coastal Women's Ventures is a collaborative program focused on creating and supporting small business opportunities for women entrepreneurs through business coaching, mentoring, small business education, and connecting participants to loan capital.

The Carolina Small Business Development Fund (CSBDF) is a statewide, non-profit and certified Community Development Financial Institution that fosters economic development in underserved communities by providing small business loans and financial training to start up and existing businesses. Similar initiatives have successfully launched by the CSBDF across the state. Coastal Women's Ventures will be the first of its kind in Southeastern North Carolina.

Services provided by the program support the YWCA Lower Cape Fear's mission to empower women through economic advancement. North Carolina has ranked third for the growth of women-owned businesses over the past two decades, but still, women entrepreneurs face unique challenges in accessing capital and other resources they need to establish successful businesses. Coastal Women's Ventures will reduce these barriers and foster a community of women's entrepreneurship.

"The partnership we've built with the CSBDF and our mutual commitment to empowering women will help fulfill the goals of the YWCA's Coastal Women's Ventures program. We couldn't be more thrilled to bring this much-needed resource to women entrepreneurs in Southeastern NC," said Jenni Harris, Board President of the YWCA Lower Cape Fear. Coastal Women's Ventures will root its operational home at the YWCA Lower Cape Fear beginning October 26 with oversight from President and CEO of the CSBDF, Lenwood V. Long, Sr., and Charrise Hart, Executive Director of the YWCA Lower Cape Fear.

For more information on Coastal Women's Ventures, the YWCA and its mission and programs, please visit [www.ywca-lowercapefear.org/cwv](http://www.ywca-lowercapefear.org/cwv).

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**About the YWCA Lower Cape Fear**

**YWCA.ORG**

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The YWCA Lower Cape Fear is on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, stand up for social justice, help families, and strengthen our community. YWCA Lower Cape Fear has a 103-year history in Wilmington, and is part of an international movement serving over 2 million in the United States and 25 million worldwide. For comprehensive information about this important work, go to: [ywca-lowercapefear.org](http://ywca-lowercapefear.org)

#### **About Carolina Small Business Development Fund**

Carolina Small Business Development Fund, previously known as The Support Center, has a mission to foster economic development in underserved communities by providing capital, business services, and policy research to support small businesses. Since 2010, CSBDF has invested more than \$40.6 million through 566 loans to small businesses across North Carolina helping to create or retain more than 1,829 jobs. For more information, please visit [www.carolinasmallbusiness.org](http://www.carolinasmallbusiness.org).