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Oregon Community Foundation Taps Nationally Recognized Community Development Finance Leader as Next CEO

*Lisa Mensah returns home and brings a background in rural development
and economic justice to OCF as she steps into chief executive role*

PORTLAND, Ore. – June 28, 2022, Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) Board of Directors announced today that they have named a national expert in economic opportunity and security, Lisa Mensah, to be the Foundation’s next Chief Executive Officer. Ms. Mensah will be OCF’s fourth CEO in its nearly 50-year history, succeeding Max Williams, who is transitioning out of his role after a decade of leadership.

Lisa Mensah is widely considered an expert on access to capital in distressed and low-wealth communities and on the role of finance in social, economic, and racial justice. As president and CEO of Opportunity Finance Network (OFN), Ms. Mensah currently heads one of the nation’s leading networks of Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs). Since joining OFN in 2017, Lisa Mensah has brought new visibility and investment to the CDFI field. Most recently during the COVID-19 pandemic, she was a forceful advocate for America’s most vulnerable small businesses and microbusinesses, helping safeguard them by bringing new capital and partners to the CDFI industry. In 2020, Google partnered with OFN to invest \$180 million in corporate and philanthropic capital into CDFIs through OFN as the lending intermediary. The same year, OFN launched the Finance Justice Fund, which strives to raise a fresh \$1 billion of socially responsible capital, with Twitter as the Fund’s first investor.

Born and raised in Oregon, Ms. Mensah is returning to her home state following an illustrious career that has taken her from working on rural poverty with the Ford Foundation to serving as Undersecretary for Rural Development at the USDA in the Obama Administration, managing a \$215 billion loan portfolio, to currently leading Opportunity Finance Network.

“I am excited to return to my roots here in Oregon; to leverage my expertise and the sum of my experiences,” said Lisa Mensah, OCF’s incoming president and CEO. “In this moment, I feel very fortunate to join hands with a 50-year tradition at Oregon Community Foundation, working to help this state and its people flourish.”

“Oregon Community Foundation catalyzes community-led solutions in support of a healthy, thriving Oregon. We look forward to welcoming Lisa Mensah back home in this new leadership role to help advance this great work, and all that will be accomplished together in the years ahead.” said Kimberly Cooper, Board Chair, Oregon Community Foundation.

Lisa Mensah begins her official role as president and CEO of Oregon Community Foundation in September 2022. She will oversee the development of the Foundation's next strategic plan and OCF's 50th anniversary in 2023. Until her arrival, Max Williams continues in the top leadership role.

About Lisa Afua Serwah Mensah

Lisa Mensah holds an M.A. from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies and a B.A. from Harvard University and has led Opportunity Finance Network since March 2017, bringing expertise in both public and private sector financial tools to improve economic security. She serves on the Board of Ecotrust, as well as the FDIC Advisory Committee on Economic Inclusion, Bank of America National Community Advisory Committee; Morgan Stanley Community Development Advisory Committee; Capital One Community Advisory Council; and Goldman Sachs One Million Black Women Advisory Council. She also sits on the boards of Fidelity Bank of Ghana and Heritage and Cultural Society of Africa-USA and the Gaia Impact Fund Advisory Council.

Ms. Mensah has previously served as USDA Undersecretary for Rural Development during the Obama Administration; founded the Initiative on Financial Security at The Aspen Institute; and held leadership positions at the Ford Foundation. She began her career in commercial banking.

OCF Board Applauds Williams' Decade of Service and Legacy of Impact

Oregon Community Foundation's outgoing leader, Max Williams was at the helm of OCF for one of the most interesting periods of growth, complexity, and impact for the foundation. In response to cascading crises of the past two years Williams oversaw the deployment of resources at an unprecedented rate, granting \$560 million to benefit every community in Oregon.

Williams leaves a legacy of impact that includes growing OCF's endowment to \$3.7 billion, creating a \$30 million Oregon Impact Fund, and stewarding some of the largest charitable gifts in Oregon's history.

"The mark of a good leader is to leave a place better than when you found it. The mark of a great leader is to ensure that the place continues its path to betterment even after you're gone," said OCF Board Chair Kimberly Cooper. "As his predecessor did for him, Max Williams is opening the door to a new voice and experienced leader who will amplify and accelerate a trajectory of impact for decades to come," she added.

"OCF is an amazing network of generous donors, volunteers and community members working together to make Oregon a better place for everyone," said Williams. "I am excited about Lisa's experience, her background and her Oregon roots. I have confidence that Lisa will expand OCF's impact as we enter the next 50 years of OCF's service to community."

About Oregon Community Foundation

Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) works with donors and volunteers to award grants and scholarships to every county in Oregon. From 2020 to 2021, OCF distributed more than \$560 million, supporting more than 4,000 nonprofits and 6,000 students. With OCF, individuals, families, businesses, and organizations create charitable funds that meet the needs of diverse communities statewide. Since its founding in 1973, OCF has distributed more than \$2 billion toward advancing its mission to improve lives for all Oregonians. For more information, please visit: oregoncf.org.

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