



## **Community Banks: Standing Ready to Revive an Economy Near You**

As Washington seeks to find solutions for the current economic crisis, rest assured that our nation's more than 8,000 community banks are ready and able to support economic recovery on a broad scale. With nearly 25,000 locations nationwide, our country has an abundance of these well-capitalized local financial powerhouses that are prepared to help mobilize the local economies that are the lifeblood of our nation's economy. You might be surprised to learn that community banks actually constitute 98 percent of all federally insured financial institutions. The assets they oversee may range from less than \$10 million to a few billion dollars. But don't confuse them with the mega financial institutions that sparked much of the economic mess in which we now find ourselves. Community banks are rooted in the communities they serve, and they represent the Main Street near you—not Wall Street.

Every April members of the Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA) and its affiliated state and regional community banking associations celebrate ICBA Community Banking Month in a variety of ways. They may offer local programs to boost financial literacy, host special events in partnership with local charities or promote economic development initiatives. Check out your local community bank and see what they have to offer. And remember that throughout the year, community banks will continue to enrich their communities and the lives of the customers they serve.

Because community banks themselves are small businesses, their officers understand the needs of small business owners and are better able to make lending decisions based on firsthand knowledge of the local economy. The decision makers at community banks are accessible to their customers on site, and many are willing to consider character, family history and discretionary spending in making loans. Their goal is to build relationships rather than simply process transactions.

Rather than shifting their funds away from local economies as the biggest banks do, community banks channel most of their funds into loans within the neighborhoods where their depositors live and work. Local deposits are put to work locally to develop small businesses, purchase and repair homes and finance college educations. Bank officers and employees often reside in the same neighborhoods as their customers, shop in the same stores, attend the same churches and send their children to the same schools. They take active roles in making their local communities better places to live by participating in civic and charitable events.

While the multinational banks chased profits and took risks to make a fast buck, most community banks stuck to their traditional sound business practices and lending standards. Now these well-capitalized, common-sense lenders stand ready and able to lead the economic recovery process by continuing to help small businesses and hard-working Americans borrow for what they need and invest in the future. As we face today's economic challenges, community banks are part of the solution.

So go down to Main Street and find a community bank near you. It may very well be one of the best decisions you ever make.

To find a community bank, visit ICBA's [Community Bank Locator](#).