



UniBank's Main Offices (Photo Credit-UniBank)

EXPANDING ACCESS TO CAPITAL UNIBANK AND CNOTE'S PARTNERSHIP FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH

UniBank, an Asian-owned minority depository institution, partnered with CNote, a women-led impact platform, to enhance their positive impact on low-to-moderate income and immigrant business owner community members. Through their collaboration, UniBank accessed new sources of deposits, increased visibility for their lending programs, and empowered their customers to navigate the American financial system.

About UniBank

Established in 2006, UniBank was originally founded to serve the Korean American community in Washington state, with a primary focus on immigrant business owners. With four branches and close to \$600 million in total assets, the bank has since expanded its services to cater to the broader Asian American community. As a minority depository institution, UniBank's leadership and ownership are predominantly people of color, with a strong representation of women on both the board of directors and management.

UniBank's primary mission is to offer banking services and access to capital for Asian American business owners, many of whom are first generation immigrants. The bank provides government guaranteed loans, such as Small Business Administration (SBA) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) loans, which allow business owners to access financing with smaller down payments than traditional commercial loans. Additionally, UniBank offers extensive one-on-one assistance through bilingual staff and connects business owners with a network of business support professionals to help with legal, accounting, and other business needs.



Senior Officers of UniBank (Photo Credit- UniBank)

About CNote

CNote is a women-led impact platform on a mission to close the wealth gap through financial innovation. Using the power of technology and a community-first framework, CNote enables corporations and individuals to efficiently invest at scale in fixed income and time deposit products that advance economic equality, racial justice, gender equity, and climate change initiatives. As part of its offering, CNote delivers regular reporting on the social impact of deposits and investments made through its platform.

A Certified B Corporation, CNote was a B Lab "Best for the World" honoree in 2019 and was named "Best Women-Owned Business" by the United Nations' Women's Empowerment Principles program in 2020. CNote was also recognized by Inc. Magazine as one of the fastest-growing private companies in America, and by Business Insider as one of the 61 most promising fintechs changing the world of banking, trading, and investing.

Meeting Growing Demand and Expanding Impact

Before partnering with CNote, UniBank was striving to meet the growing demand for banking services and access to capital among Asian American business owners, many of whom are immigrants.

According to a 2021 report by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), there were approximately 2.2 million Asian American-owned businesses in the United States, which generated over \$700 billion in annual revenue and employed around 3.5 million people. Despite their substantial economic impact, these businesses often face unique barriers when it comes to accessing financial services and capital.

A 2019 report by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC) showed that Asian-owned businesses, on average, received smaller loan amounts compared to white-owned businesses. The report also highlighted that BIPOC-owned businesses, including those owned by Asian Americans, were more likely to rely on personal savings, credit cards, and alternative financing sources, rather than traditional bank loans.

This underscores the importance of financial institutions like UniBank which are addressing the disparities in access to capital for Asian American-owned businesses. And while UniBank had successfully served its community since 2006, they recognized the potential to expand their reach and increase their lending capacity. To achieve this, UniBank needed to explore innovative ways to access funding sources and connect with impact investors who shared their mission of empowering under-resourced communities.

The management team often wondered whether it would be possible to receive deposits from ESG-minded companies, organizations and individuals outside of its target market. However, without the relationships and proper infrastructure, it did not seem plausible.



A recipient of UniBank's Dream Scholarship (Photo Credit-UniBank)

2.2M

Asian American-owned businesses in the United States

\$700B

in annual revenue

3.5M

people employed

CNote's Impact Cash® emerged as the ideal solution to address UniBank's challenge of connecting with new sources of deposits. By facilitating partnerships with corporations and impact investors, CNote's innovative program emphasized long-term community impact and sustainable growth.

Although still in the nascent stage of the relationship, the Impact Cash® program expanded UniBank's access to investor capital, which increased UniBank's lending capacity, enabling it to provide a steady flow of deposits to support its mission of empowering local communities and businesses.

In addition to the increased access to funds, CNote's Impact Cash® facilitated direct connections to a diverse network of impact investors. This was achieved through a single touchpoint, which streamlined the process and allowed UniBank to expand its visibility and access to deposits more efficiently. The convenience of this centralized platform proved invaluable in fostering new relationships and attracting additional funding sources.

Furthermore, the partnership between CNote and UniBank extended beyond financial connections. As an added benefit, CNote has offered to provide the opportunity for essential marketing support to amplify UniBank's lending programs and the success stories of community entrepreneurs. By showcasing the bank's dedication to its mission, this marketing assistance helps to enhance UniBank's reputation and reach within its target communities.

The CNote Impact Cash® program is expected to play a meaningful role in addressing UniBank's challenge of connecting with new sources of stable deposits to serve more under-resourced members of their community. The program's emphasis on long-term community impact, streamlined access to a diverse network of impact investors, and comprehensive marketing support are all contributing factors to UniBank's growth and ongoing support for communities and businesses in its target market. As a result, both UniBank and the communities it serves will continue to prosper.

Impact Cash® is Designed to Work with Banks

CNote Impact Cash® connects corporations and other impact investors to community banks that work to affect positive change for their community members. **CNote resources are free for financial institutions participating in Impact Cash®.**

CNote works to support banks like UniBank to expand the reach of the impactful work they do, on their terms. With technology that makes scalability simple, we create efficiencies and take the burden off of banks.

Impact Cash® benefits include:

- A new source of sticky deposits that prioritize long-term community impact.
- Flexible deposits: banks tell CNote when deposits are needed to access investor funds.
- Direct connections to a network of new impact investors through a single touchpoint.
- Increased visibility: marketing support to highlight the bank, the lending programs, and community entrepreneurs.

Here are some of the banks that CNote is partnered with:



With the support of CNote's Impact Cash[®], UniBank has increased its capacity to meet the growing demand for its services and expand its positive impact on the communities it serves. This has provided the bank with further opportunities to contribute to the economic growth of the Asian American community. The collaboration has not only expanded UniBank's reach but has also strengthened its impact on the communities where it operates, with 67% BIPOC residents in those communities.

The strategic partnership between UniBank and CNote has showcased the power of collaboration between mission-driven financial institutions and impact platforms. By leveraging CNote's Impact Cash Solution[®], UniBank has been able to address its challenge of meeting growing demand and expanding its impact, ultimately reaching more customers, empowering communities, and fostering a more inclusive financial system.

"UniBank has emerged as a shining beacon of hope and opportunity in Washington, especially for the vibrant Asian American community. Their relentless dedication to financial inclusion and empowerment has created a long-lasting, positive impact on countless lives. They are not just a bank; they are the very embodiment of progress and unity in action."

~ Matthew Royles, CNote

"The deposits we've received from CNote's program have increased our capacity to serve our customers, enabling us to provide more loans and support to small businesses and individuals. We hope that this program will have a greater role in driving sustainable growth and fostering economic development, empowering our customers to succeed in their ventures and build generational wealth."

~ Simon Bai, UniBank



(Photo Credit-UniBank)

CNote Corporate Partners



Learn more about UniBank

 www.unibank.com



Learn more about Impact Cash®

Contact our team:

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The Business Insider logo, consisting of the words 'BUSINESS INSIDER' in white, uppercase letters on a dark teal rectangular background.

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changing the world of banking,
trading, and investing

The Inc. 5000 logo, with 'Inc.' in black and '5000' in large, colorful digits (5 is red, 0 is yellow, 0 is blue, 0 is black).

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