

Issues & Answers



April 2025

Bankers Care: Let's Remember Why



*By Glen Simecek
President and CEO
Washington Bankers
Association*

Let's face it: popular culture usually doesn't do the banking industry any favors. From the greedy Mr. Potter in "It's a Wonderful Life" to the unscrupulous derivatives traders of "The Big Short," bankers are more often than not portrayed as lining their own pockets by preying on the innocent and less fortunate.

Unfortunately, that cartoonish characterization seems to resonate with some segments of the public and, worse yet, among some members of the Legislature. But we know that this picture doesn't reflect the work bankers in Washington do every day, including the many ways their charitable donations and volunteer efforts make their communities stronger.

That's why WBA launched our Bank-

ers Care initiative a dozen years ago. The program began because WBA leaders recognized the need for our industry to overcome its traditional reluctance to toot its own horn and shine some additional light on the good work bankers do in the local community.

In the early years, we coordinated several successful and highly visible food drives under the Bankers Care banner, generating hundreds of thousands of meals for area food banks. Then, when a 2014 mudslide devastated the area around Oso in northern Snohomish County, we repurposed one of our Bankers Care events to provide timely and much-needed aid to the area.

Over time, we realized that the Bankers Care program should be more than just one or two multi-bank campaigns annually. Banks are doing amazing things in supporting good causes throughout the year, and Bankers Care became our brand to link these efforts together, amplify their

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Issues & Answers April 2025

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impact, and bring additional visibility to our members' contributions.

If your bank has already signed on as one of the 15 WBA members participating in the Bankers Care program, thank you. If you haven't, we encourage you to do so today. It's free – any WBA member bank can license and use the Bankers Care trademark simply by attesting that you are meeting your CRA compliance requirements and doing a little more in the community.

If you want to learn more about Bankers Care or share the program with your customers and community, we have produced a series of videos explaining what the program is all about and why it's so important. They're studded with great photos of bankers outside the office, delivering checks and pitching in on community projects.

We plan to share these videos with legislators as a friendly reminder of the unique catalytic role banks play in driving the economic health and social vitality of communities across the state. We are also investigating other venues to get this message before the public. In the meantime, you can give yourself a feel-good reminder of how Washington bankers are making a difference in the community by checking out the videos online at BankersCare.com.

Speaking of making a difference, I want to remind everyone that April is Financial Literacy Month. It's another important cause that WBA member bankers will be out volunteering for in their community. Meanwhile, throughout the month, we will be busy advocating for lawmakers to take action before they leave Olympia and make financial literacy a high school graduation requirement.

If you ever wonder why we do all this, why Bankers Care, the answer can be summed up in four words from a woman named Linda, who appears in one of our videos and talks about participating in the WBA-sponsored CareerWork\$ BankWork\$ training program.

She said simply, "It changed my life."

Contact Us

Contact the Washington Bankers Association at 601 Union
Street, Suite 1720, Seattle, WA 98101

Call us at (206) 447-1700 and visit us on the
web at wabankers.com.

Connect With Us

Connect with the WBA online by following us on our social
media accounts.

On the Cover

April and the start of spring in Western Washington is synonymous with the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival, drawing thousands of visitors of the fields to see the gorgeous displays of colors.

Photo courtesy of flickr/l.madhavan

HAVE NEWS TO SHARE?

Email it to megan@wabankers.com to be
included in an upcoming *Issues & Answers*



Celebrating a Legacy of Collaboration



By Rob Nichols, President & CEO, American Bankers Association

At the beginning of this year, my travels on behalf of ABA took me to southern California at a time when deadly wildfires were still raging through many neighborhoods in Los Angeles and the

surrounding area.

As I sat there in that room full of bankers, friends and colleagues, the sentiment I felt was unmistakable: that when the smoke cleared and the dust settled, bankers would be there, ready to serve their communities and support the recovery—just as they have done throughout American history.

As I reflect on ABA's 150th milestone anniversary in 2025, and as I look at where we are as a nation today, I am reminded that bankers have a long and proud tradition of coming together during hard times to work together and find solutions.

That certainly was true of ABA's founding; in 1873, the United States was facing a financial panic and one of the worst recessions in history. Unemployment and bankruptcies were surging, and 300 banks failed. It was on the heels of this unrest that two young bankers—inspired by the women's suffrage movement and the power of collective action—worked to convene the first-ever meeting of the American Bankers Association in July 1875 in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Since then, ABA has provided a forum for bankers to meet and together develop solutions that make the

banking sector stronger, safer, and more accessible.

Just a few examples: We helped mobilize bankers to safeguard bank funds during a string of bank robberies in the 1890s; we pioneered the routing number system that made it easier for customers to move money; and we encouraged bank lending throughout World War II to help finance military operations through bank purchases of government bonds.

In more recent times, ABA has supported banks' role as economic first responders in the wake of major natural disasters (like the recent floods in Kentucky) and a global pandemic, and we have helped bolster their mission of making sure that the American dream is achievable for all Americans, particularly those in historically underserved communities.

As we continue to face a climate of unprecedented challenges, from a deeply divided political landscape to heightened economic uncertainty, our nation's banks remain strong, resilient and ready to respond to whatever comes our way. ABA is standing ready to aid them in their important work.

Despite the many things today that threaten to divide us, much like our founders did 150 years ago, I too believe that we are stronger together. And I hope that in the months and years to come, you'll continue to be an active part of this organization. Continue sharing your voices, your perspectives and your ideas as we work to shape the future of banking policy in this country over the next 150 years.

Together, we can—and will—achieve more.

SADDLE UP
FOR NEW FRONTIERS IN BANKING

2025 ANNUAL CONVENTION
JULY 28-30
COEUR D'ALENE RESORT

IDAHO BANKERS ASSOCIATION
NEVADA BANKERS ASSOCIATION
OREGON BANKERS ASSOCIATION
WBA

Register online at wabankers.com/convention



MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

Learn more at votervoice.net/wabankers/home



2025 Agricultural Conference: Essential Insights for a Changing Industry

The agricultural industry is rapidly evolving, and staying informed on the latest trends, policies, and innovations is crucial for agricultural bankers. The 2025 Agricultural Bankers Conference, hosted by the Washington, Oregon, and Idaho Bankers Associations, offers an invaluable opportunity for industry professionals to gain insights, network with peers, and hear from top experts in the field.

This year's conference will be held May 7–9, 2025, at The Riverside Hotel in Boise, Idaho. It will feature a packed agenda of expert-led discussions, industry tours, and networking events.

The conference opens with a Golf Tournament and lunch at Eagle Hills Golf Course, sponsored by Conterra Ag Capital.

The main conference sessions begin on Thursday, May 8, with a dynamic lineup of speakers covering emerging technology, policy updates, and agricultural economic trends.

- Willie Vogt, Ag Technology Observer, “10 Technologies Changing Agriculture, and What You Can Do to Get Ready” Vogt will explore today's most significant technological advancements, including autonomy, electrification, and precision farming, and how bankers can prepare for these changes.
- Ed Elfmann, SVP of Agriculture and Banking Policy, ABA, “Legislative and Regulatory Issues Affecting Agricultural and Rural Banking” Elfmann will discuss key legislative and regulatory developments impacting agricultural banking in 2025, offering insights to help bankers navigate policy changes.
- Jackson Takach, Chief Economist, VP of Strategy, Research & Analytics, Farmer Mac, As a leading voice in agricultural finance, Takach will provide an economic outlook for the sector, covering market conditions, lending trends, and financial challenges affecting ag bankers.
- Hemingway Power Line Project Discussion, Idaho Power. This session will highlight a significant infrastructure project affecting the agricultural sector and provide insight into its financial and operational impact.

After a networking lunch, attendees can join a guided industry tour to gain firsthand insights into local agricultural operations. The day concludes with a reception and dinner sponsored by Farmer Mac.

The conference's final day focuses on global agriculture trends and industry challenges. Brett Stuart of Global AgriTrends, a globally recognized expert in agricultural markets, will discuss



international agri-business trends, covering livestock, trade, and economic impacts that could affect U.S. agriculture and banking.

Why Attend?

- Expert Insights – Hear from top industry leaders on technology, policy, and economic trends shaping the future of agricultural banking.
- Valuable Networking: Attend receptions, meals, and interactive sessions to Connect with banking professionals, policymakers, and industry partners.
- Real-World Learning – Participate in the industry tour and gain firsthand exposure to ag operations.

Register Today!

Registration is now open! Secure your spot today and reserve your hotel room at the group rate of \$179 per night at The Riverside Hotel. Call (208) 343-1871 and mention the Idaho Bankers Ag Conference. The room block expires on April 7, 2025.

Don't miss this opportunity to stay ahead in the ag banking industry—register now and join us in Boise for an engaging and informative event!

Events Calendar

April 3 – Understanding Bank Performance

April 7-9 – 2025 ABA Washington Summit, D.C.

April 14 – Credit Analyst Development Program

April 16 – Management Development

April 29 – Virtual Engage Conference

May 7-9 – Agricultural Bankers Conference, ID

May 13 – CBA Annual Conference, La Quinta, CA

May 22 – OBA Women in Banking Luncheon, OR

May 30 – PSBJ Women Who Lead

June 5 – WBA Night at Spokane Indians

July 10 – Understanding Bank Performance

July 28-30 – 2025 Annual Convention; Coeur d'Alene, ID

Aug. 14-16 – KBA Fraud Academy

Aug. 21 – Commercial Lending Development Program

Sept. 16 – Understanding Bank Performance

To register or to learn more about any of the listed events, please visit www.wabankers.com/calendar.

Celebrate Financial Literacy Month with ABA's Teach Children to Save!

Teach Children to Save is now easier and more fun than ever—both for bankers and for kids. Whether you impart personal finance knowledge on Teach Children to Save Day (the 4th Thursday in April) or any day of the year, you're part of this financial education movement.

Help elementary and middle schoolers in your community learn good savings habits through free, banker-led outreach opportunities. Whether you raise financial awareness in your branch through digital platforms, community events, or virtual presentations, you can quickly meet your audience where they are. Check out our communications toolkit for plug-and-play ideas, and screen engaging videos at your leisure that cover topics that matter most to our financial education mission—your K-8 audience will be at the edge of their seats. Whether you use our library of resources or mix and match with your resources, register for Teach Children to Save to show how your bank advocates for financial education.

Banks of all sizes that actively provide youth financial education using any curriculum are invited to register for Teach Children to Save at no cost.

The list of program participants is shared with State Bank Associations, policymakers, and consumers. Additionally, registered participants will receive access to all Teach Children to Save resources.

To learn more about the program, visit www.aba.com/advocacy/community-programs/teach-children-save.



Join a Financial Beginnings Events in April

Join Financial Beginnings to celebrate financial empowerment and connect with like-minded folks in the financial education space. Throughout the month of April, Financial Beginnings will be hosting events open to our volunteers and any community members who want to become more familiar with our financial empowerment programs, add to their classroom toolkit, and connect with other folks who are passionate about financial education. Scroll down to learn more about the month's offerings and how to register!

Learn more online at financialbeginnings.org/financial-literacy-month.

Financial Literacy Month '25

APRIL EVENTS

	4/1 @ 10:30 AM Curriculum Training: Foundations	4/2 @ 12:30 PM New-Volunteer Orientation	
4/7 @ 12:30 PM New-Volunteer Orientation			4/4 @ 9:00 AM Curriculum Training: SAFE
FINANCIALBEGINNINGS.ORG/ DONATION-OPTIONS/		4/16 @ 1:00 PM New-Volunteer Orientation	4/17 @ 12:00 PM Homeownership Webinar (FREE)
4/21 @ 1:00 PM New-Volunteer Orientation	Date TBD @ 4:00 PM Stronger Together: A Virtual Roundtable		4/18 @ 9:00 AM Curriculum Training: SAFE
			4/11 @ 9:00 AM Curriculum Training: Forward
			4/25 @ 9:00 AM Curriculum Training: Forward

12 Graduate from Retail Branch Manager Development Program

In early March, 12 students graduated from the Retail Branch Manager Development Program after finishing the six-session program that began in October.

RBMDP is a six-month course designed to strengthen the leadership and operational skills of current and aspiring retail bank managers. Through monthly virtual sessions, hands-on projects, and one-on-one mentorship, participants gain a strong foundation in key areas such as lending, team leadership, communication, and customer engagement. Led by industry experts, the program equips graduates with the tools to lead with purpose, drive results, and thrive in today's evolving retail banking environment.

This includes a strategic project that each study group works on throughout the program. The project is designed to help solve a problem or challenge facing the group's organization. In the final session, the students present their project to the class and receive feedback.

Congratulations to the following graduates: Morgan Finger, Umpqua Bank; Windy Gill, Cashmere Valley Bank; Kailey Gutierrez, Cashmere Valley Bank; Sabri-




na Hall, Cashmere Valley Bank; Daniel Hanson, Commencement Bank; Kristina Hughes, 1st Security Bank of Washington; Blake Kanz, Commencement Bank; Kari Mullins, Cashmere Valley Bank; Delia Oyos, Cashmere Valley Bank; Isaac Perez, Cashmere Valley Bank; Masukur Rahman, 1st Security Bank of Washington; and Angela Ward, Cashmere Valley Bank.

The next RBMDP will begin in October of 2025.


APRIL 14 - MAY 9, 2025
FINANCIAL EDUCATION
Reading Days

This year's books:

- Count on Pablo by Barbara deRubertis
- Isabel's Car Wash by Sheila Bair




Register your classroom to host a reader



Register as a classroom reader

FINANCIAL EDUCATION READING DAYS IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY



WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO FIRST FED BANK FOR THEIR GENEROUS DONATION FOR THIS YEAR'S BOOKS.

Register for Financial Education Reading Days in April

In celebration of Financial Capability Month, the Financial Education Public-Private Partnership (FEPPP), Washington Jump\$tart Coalition, and Washington State Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) are excited to bring you the 2025 Financial Education Reading Days in Washington.

During this event, community members will visit elementary school classrooms to read a pre-selected book with a financial education focus.

This year reading days will run from April 14 - May 9.

This year's books are Count on Pablo by Barbara deRubertis and Isabel's Car Wash by Sheila Bair. A special thanks to First Fed Bank for their generous donation for this year's books.

Register to read in a classroom using the QR codes in the picture or visit the FEPPP or DFI websites.

READY TO LEARN?

Get the latest on WBA events online at
www.wabankers.com/calendar



Washington Trust Bank Volunteers with Spokane Valley Kiwanis Club

Washington Trust Bank volunteered with the Spokane Valley Kiwanis Club earlier this year to help donate stuffed animals to the Spokane Valley Fire and Police Departments.

Over 1,700 items were donated to give to children in the community who needed extra comfort.

“Often when we come into contact with children it is on one of the worst days of their lives. Having a stuffed animal to provide to them helps make it just a little bit better,” said Dave Ellis, Spokane Valley Police Chief.



KeyBank Participates in Tacoma Pierce County Economic Development Board Annual Meeting

The KeyBank South Sound team recently attended the annual meeting of the Tacoma Pierce County Economic Development Board.

The event featured an afternoon of celebrations around businesses, building collaboration across industries, and ways to impact the greater community.



U.S. Bank Volunteers at 2nd Harvest

Teams from multiple business lines at U.S. Bank gathered in Eastern Washington to volunteer at 2nd Harvest for several days this spring.

The group packed 500 pounds of spices and 5,000 pounds of food to help families across the Spokane area access food.



Washington Trust Bank Donates to Generation Alive

Washington Trust Bank announced in late February a \$2,500 donation to Generation Alive to encourage youth in the community.

The team at Bemis Elementary is working with their classmates to package meals in April after an assembly about the 70,000 people in Spokane County who are food insecure and what that means.

Along with the donation, bank volunteers have pledged to be present when they build the meal packs.

Industry News

New Hires

RJ Jabbari
Treasury Management Officer at First Fed Bank

Stephanie LaCour
Specialty Resolutions Counselor at First Fed Bank

Promotions

Bentley Simpson
Senior Vice President and Controller at Kitsap Bank

Angela Forsythe
Branch Manager at Kitsap Bank

Have Industry News to share with WBA? Email megan@wabankers.com or call (206) 344-3472.



Sound Community Bank Participates in Olympic Medical Center Foundation Luncheon

Sound Community Bank's Shelli Robb recently attended the Olympic Medical Center Foundation's Red, Set, Go luncheon, which benefits the Olympic Medical Center's Heart Center.

The annual event promotes heart disease awareness and encourages women to educate themselves about heart health and potential warning signs.

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Riverview Bank Sponsors West Columbia Gorge Humane Society Dinner and Auction

Riverview Bank was the presenting sponsor for the West Columbia Gorge Humane Society's annual Dinner and Auction, which in 2025 had the theme "A Tail to Remember."

This event helps animals and those who care for them at the shelter.



U.S. Bank Participates in Make-a-Wish Event

The Spokane U.S. Bank team recently had the opportunity to participate in a Make-a-Wish reveal for a local child.

The group attended Matthew's wish reveal at Mobius Science Center in Spokane, where he discovered he was going to Disney World and a SpaceX launch thanks to the Wishing Star Foundation and Mobius Science Center.

1st Security Bank of Washington Announced 2024 Giving Totals

In early 2025, 1st Security Bank of Washington announced the bank's giving impacts from 2024.

The team dedicated 6,248 hours of volunteer time and contributed \$871,057 to support local nonprofits.

The bank said online, "Thank you for your dedication to making a difference! Here's to another year of service and community impact."

StateBank Northwest Leader Honored by Eastern Washington University

StateBank Northwest President and CEO Greg Deckard was recently honored by Eastern Washington University at the EWU Alumni Award Gala.

Deckard earned the Benjamin P. Cheney Lifetime Achievement Award and will be recognized at the event at the end of April.



Baker Boyer Bank Donates to United Way of Blue Mountains

Baker Boyer Bank announced earlier this year that, as part of the Employee Giving Campaign, it was donating just over \$13,000 to the United Way of the Blue Mountains thanks to the

2024 payroll deduction program.

The program encourages employees to give a small amount with each paycheck, which snowballs into a large amount at the end of the year.

Olympia Federal Savings Donates to Yelm Community Schools

Olympia Federal Savings recently announced a \$5,000 donation to Yelm Community Schools to help offset the district's budget concerns.

The donation was made during the February board meeting for the school district and will help support the district keeping the school's graduation ceremony at the Tacoma Dome.

OlyFed helped the district when it started its Pride of the Prairie Campaign in the fall and paid the district what it would have paid in levy taxes. The bank also has used funds from the Two-Cents program to donate to the initiative, raising \$3,000 in one month.



Riverview Bank Participates in Read Across America Week

Riverview Bank has participated in the annual Read Across America Week event for the last 15 years, joining the Foundation for Vancouver Public Schools and providing books to first-grade students.

The team from the bank volunteered by handing out sunglasses and Hawaiian leis to students as they participated in a fun breakfast to celebrate the event.



Cashmere Valley Bank Donates to Warm Souls

Cashmere Valley Bank's East Wenatchee branch recently donated its denim fund to Warm Souls.

The group provides socks, blankets, and lap robes to those in care facilities and hospices dealing with terminal illnesses.

The bank's denim fund allows banks to wear jeans on Fridays with a small donation, which is then given to a nonprofit voted on by the branch.

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KeyBank Supports International Women's Day Event in Edmonds

The local KeyBank team recently attended an International Women's Day event in Edmonds at the beginning of March.

The bank sponsored the Edmonds event, designed to champion empowerment and lift each other.



Olympia Federal Savings Donates to TOGETHER!

Olympia Federal Savings announced that the bank's two-cent program partner for February was TOGETHER! Received \$2,540.

The organization works to advance the health and well-being of all young people throughout the bank's footprint.

The two-cent program donates two cents from each debit card purchase at the bank to that month's nonprofit of choice.



Riverview Bank Sponsors Lucky Shamrock Event

Riverview Bank recently sponsored Rocksolid's Luck Shamrock Event.

The event featured silent and live auctions, games, and entertainment.



HomeStreet Bank Announces Community Volunteer Grant

HomeStreet Bank made a Community Volunteer Grant to the Issaquah Food and Clothing Bank in honor of Uma Minakshisundaram, who donated 30 hours of her time to the organization.

The bank donates to any nonprofit when an employee hits this volunteer milestone.

U.S. Bank Volunteers at Imagine Children's Museum

The U.S. Bank team recently volunteered at Imagine Children's Museum.

The group started the week off with the museum, helping to give back to the local community.



Washington Trust Bank Volunteers with Girl Scouts

The Washington Trust Bank team recently volunteered with the Girl Scouts Eastern Washington & Northern Idaho during their annual Sweets Before Supper Gala in Spokane.

The event honors women leaders in the community through the Women of Distinction Awards, highlighting efforts to shape the next generation of women leaders.

Of course, it wouldn't be a Girl Scout event without cookies, and it featured sweets and desserts from bakeries throughout the area.



Mountain Pacific Bank Donates to Work Opportunities

Mountain Pacific Bank recently donated to Work Opportunities in honor of the upcoming gala.

The bank is the Fund-A-Need sponsor for the gala, helping to continue the organization's mission of providing meaningful employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The bank has also invited the organization to participate in the annual Business Expo, helping to build their connections and grow.

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Cannabis Lending for Financial Institutions: Opportunities, Risk and Best Practices



By Terri Luttrell, Compliance and Engagement Director, Abrigo

The cannabis industry is growing at an unprecedented pace, and with it comes exciting opportunities for financial institutions to expand their loan portfolios. Cannabis-related businesses (CRBs)—spanning everything from cultivation to retail—represent a market in need of lending services, from working capital to real estate and equipment loans. Yet, they remain underserved due to the risks involved. Federal regulations under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) still classify marijuana as a Schedule I substance, along with heroin and methamphetamine. Although most states have legalized marijuana for medicinal or recreational use, the fact remains that it is federally illegal. Many are calling for a re-evaluation of federal laws to better match state legislation.

Most traditional financial institutions are federally insured, and technically, if banks and credit unions provide services to CRBs, they could be criticized for participating in money laundering. With this regulatory risk and associated operational complexities, there is plenty for financial institutions to consider before diving into cannabis lending. With the right approach, the rewards may outweigh the risks, creating opportunities for both financial institutions and the communities they serve.

Now that the cannabis industry is maturing and better understood, is it time for financial institutions to take on that risk? According to FinCEN suspicious activity report (SAR) data, over 800 financial institutions have decided yes, at least to banking deposit services for CRBs. But what about lending?

The opportunities: Why cannabis lending may make good business sense

The legalized cannabis market grew \$2.6 billion year-over-year in 2024, totaling \$31.4 billion in annual revenue. This staggering amount presents a lucrative opportunity for banks and credit unions to step in and meet the growing need for banking services while supporting businesses within their communities.

Cannabis lending is more than just a potential revenue stream. It's a way to serve businesses that are often forced to operate outside traditional financial systems. CRBs frequently face difficulties securing loans or even maintaining a bank account, leaving them to manage their cash businesses outside of traditional financial institutions. Imagine the stress of running a thriving enterprise while worrying about security risks tied to cash-intensive operations. Financial institutions can fill



this gap, creating stability for CRBs while fostering long-term, loyal customer relationships.

The benefits extend beyond the businesses themselves. Lending to CRBs supports local economies by fueling job creation, boosting tax revenue, and promoting community growth. For community financial institutions, this is an opportunity to align with their mission of empowering local businesses. For those willing to innovate, it's a chance to differentiate themselves in an underserved market, positioning themselves a step ahead of their competition. Getting on board now allows banks and credit unions to profit from the need for banking services, allowing higher loan rates to cover the associated risks.

Challenges: What's standing in the way?

Entering the cannabis lending market isn't without risk. Federal and state laws are at odds, creating a gray area that financial institutions must navigate carefully. Even with strong compliance programs, there's always the potential for scrutiny from regulators. There is a current understanding among regulators and financial institutions that it is "ok" to bank CRBs, but this informal agreement is unwritten and could change at any moment.

How to secure cannabis-related loans is critical to ensure your collateral doesn't literally "go up in smoke." Lenders may require loans to be secured by non-product sources, such as cash, real estate, equipment, or the cannabis license itself. These alternative collateral options help mitigate risk and provide lenders with more stable and recoverable assets in the event of default.

Then, there's the operational side. Financial institutions should have operational accounts when considering lending to CRBs to truly understand the relationship. CRBs are cash-intensive businesses, regardless of federal legality. For financial institutions, this means investing in the right anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) software to monitor transactions, flag suspicious activities, and ensure compliance with AML/CFT requirements. However, compliance goes beyond software. Institutions must also establish robust internal controls, enhance staff training, and refine customer due diligence (CDD) procedures to manage risks effectively. Ongoing regulatory uncertainty means financial institutions must stay agile, continuous-

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ly updating policies and procedures to align with shifting state and federal guidance.

Let's not forget reputation risk. Serving CRBs might raise questions among more conservative stakeholders and within the communities they serve, but clear policies and open communication can help mitigate these concerns. When institutions approach cannabis lending with transparency and professionalism, they can address reputational risks head-on.

Preparing to grow your loan portfolio: Steps to take

Financial institutions considering cannabis lending need a roadmap, starting with compliance. Robust AML/CFT programs tailored to CRBs are crucial, as is ongoing monitoring to ensure these businesses operate within the law. Keep an eye on federal developments like rescheduling marijuana under the CSA and the SAFE (or SAFER) Banking Act, which could ease regulatory burdens if passed.

Next, set clear internal policies. Define loan criteria, particularly collateral requirements, establish risk thresholds, and determine how to handle unique challenges posed by CRBs. For example, will you require additional licensing documentation from cannabis businesses to verify compliance with state laws? These details matter. Remember the basics of lending strategy: relationship, character, and collateral being key components.

Technology will also play a vital role. Automated systems for compliance, transaction monitoring, and customer due diligence can save time and reduce human error. Consider partnering with experts—compliance advisors, specialists, or consultants familiar with the cannabis industry. Their insights can be invaluable as you navigate this complex market.

Adequate staffing will also be critical to the success of a CRB lending program. To safeguard the integrity of your program, increased monitoring, site visits, and enhanced due diligence review will be required, and all require qualified staff. Regulators won't care about your AML/CFT budget, so be prepared to charge appropriate rates to cover the additional costs.

A balanced approach: Seizing the opportunity responsibly

Cannabis lending isn't a decision to be taken lightly, but it's one worth considering. By serving CRBs, financial institutions can help stabilize a fast-growing industry while creating new revenue streams. It can be a win-win for institutions and the communities they serve. Early adopters can benefit financially, just as the first financial institutions did when they opened their services to CRB deposit accounts.

That said, success in this space requires preparation, adaptability, and a strong commitment to compliance. Get ahead of this decision by including your regulator in the planning phase. Institutions must stay informed on state laws and requirements, invest in the right tools, and approach the market with care. The challenges are real, but so are the rewards. With the right strategy, cannabis lending can become a key part of a financial institution's growth plan—offering profitability, community impact, and innovation. The cannabis industry is evolving quickly. Is your institution ready to grow with it?

Terri Luttrell is a seasoned AML professional and former director and AML/OFAC officer with over 20 years in the banking industry, working both in medium and large community and commercial banks ranging from \$2 billion to \$330 billion in asset size.

The Ultimate Fraud Prevention Training Program Returns!

FRAUD NEVER SLEEPS

AUGUST 12 - 14, 2025

www.fraudacademyhq.com/

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Chase Hosts Credit Workshop at Renton Technical College

Chase recently hosted a free credit workshop for Renton Technical College (RTC) students.

The program helps students learn about credit and how to establish healthy habits. The RTC professional-technical programs help students build career pathways.



WaFd Bank Volunteers at Helping Hands

The Anacortes and Burlington WaFd Bank teams recently volunteered at Helping Hands.

The group helped pack over 900 Cutting Hunger on Weekend (CHOW) bags, which provide essential weekend meals to children in Skagit County, where over 40% of students in the school system rely on free or reduced lunch programs.

CHOW delivers food to over 800 kids a week, and the bank is proud to support their work.



Riverview Bank Sponsors Greater Vancouver Chamber Awards

Riverview Bank was the presenting sponsor for the 2025 Greater Vancouver Iris Awards.

The annual event brings together businesses and partners from greater Vancouver, celebrating the year and inspiring people who make the community what it is.



KeyBank Attends Arts Corps Event

The local KeyBank team recently attended an event at the WOW Art Gallery that supported the Arts Corps.

The organization helps youth express themselves and thrive through arts education.

The event included visual art displays, dance, choir, and poetry readings.



SaviBank Leads Homebuying Seminar

Members of the SaviBank team and a realtor from Reluty Real Estate helped lead a Washington State Housing Finance Commission seminar.

The event provided insights to aspiring homeowners in the community, sharing information about the process and what to expect as they begin the journey, including information from Guardian Northwest Title and State Farm.

The 24 people who attended and completed the seminar will be eligible for down payment assistance.



WaFd Bank Participates in Elizabeth Gregory Home's Spring Luncheon

This spring, members of the WaFd Bank team participated in the annual Elizabeth Gregory Home's Spring Luncheon.

The bank sponsored a table at the event.

The organization works to provide refuge and space for women who are experiencing homelessness, trauma, and economic insecurity and access to caring communities and critical resources.

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Sound Community Bank Participates in Park Clean-Up

The Sound Community Bank team in Mountlake Terrace recently hosted a clean-up in their adopted park, Terrace Creek.

The group picked up garbage, pulled weeds, and did other work to improve the park's appearance and feel for the community.



U.S. Bank Attends UW Foster School of Business Resource Fair

The U.S. Bank team in Seattle recently attended the UW Foster School of Business and Ascend program resource fair.

The event brought together a group of entrepreneurs participating in an accelerator who were pursuing contracts through general contractors in the area. They were excited to connect with other business leaders.

WaFd Bank Participates in Kent Chamber Annual Women's Wellness Breakfast

The WaFd Bank team recently participated in the Kent Chamber of Commerce's annual Women's Wellness Breakfast.

The event celebrates women's small-owned businesses in the community, including awards and honors for those recognized for giving back.



Commencement Bank Celebrates Partnership with Tacoma Rainiers

Commencement Bank celebrates spring with the beginning of baseball season and another year supporting the Tacoma Rainiers.



The bank participated in the annual celebration of season ticket holders at Commencement Bank Summit Club, where they met fellow fans, won prizes, and looked forward to another fun season at the ballpark.



U.S. Bank Celebrates Opening of Greenwood Branch

In early March, U.S. Bank celebrated opening its newest branch in Seattle, in the Greenwood neighborhood.

The bank celebrated with food, inspiring local performances, and lots of local visitors in a busy Seattle neighborhood.



Yakima Federal Savings Sponsors Pitch Latino Awards

Yakima Federal Savings sponsored the Pitch Latino business incubator awards in early March in Kennewick.

The event provided Latino startup entrepreneurs with a platform to connect with the region's business ecosystem. Each entrepreneur pitched their business idea and then answered questions about it.

Judy Manley, a loan officer at the bank, was a judge and presented the winning checks.

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KeyBank Attends Big Brothers Big Sisters Awards Event

The Seattle KeyBank team recently attended the Big Brother Big Sister of Puget Sound awards ceremony after being nominated for Community Partner of the Year.

“Such an honor to be considered; we appreciate your consistent collaboration and partnership,” said the bank online.



Washington Trust Bank Hosts Junior Achievement Mobile Finance Park

Washington Trust Bank hosted Junior Achievement’s Mobile Finance Park at its headquarters in Spokane in March, welcoming about 100 East Valley High School students to participate in the event.

Over 30 bankers volunteered throughout the day to run the event, during which students worked through a real-life budget and dealt with everyday life challenges.

Peoples Bank Donates to Hope Creek Food Bank

Peoples Bank recently donated \$1,000 to Hope Creek Food Bank.

The organization works to help the community and provide food to families in need.



KeyBank Participates in Horizon Fundraising Luncheon

The KeyBank team in Puget Sound recently attended the Horizon Fundraising Luncheon at the Edmonds Waterfront Center in Edmonds.



“It was inspiring to see this community come together to support such a meaningful case, connecting and enriching the lives of so many,” said Erika Lacio, AVP and business relationships at manager KeyBank.



WaFd Banker Teaches at Auburn Senior Center

A banker from WaFd Bank in Auburn recently taught a class at the Auburn Senior Activity Center.

She presented Choosing a Financial Caregiving with materials from Financial Beginnings, helping seniors understand the ins and outs of what to look for in someone to help them with money choices as they get older.



Riverview Bank Attends Why Racing Events Couve Clover Run

Riverview Bank attended and ran the annual Why Racing Events Couve Clover Run in downtown Vancouver in mid-March.

The team came together to celebrate the community and was in the downtown corridor until the early afternoon.



Olympia Federal Savings Attends Economic Summit Luncheon

Olympia Federal Savings recently attended the Kitsap Building Association’s annual Economic Summit Luncheon.

The event highlighted the local economy and the work done to bring it together with collaboration and partnerships.

If you have WBA member news to share, please email it to megan@wabankers.com.



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