**Media Contact**

**Sarah Snell Cooke**

[sarah@cookeconsultingsolutions.com](mailto:sarah@cookeconsultingsolutions.com)

443.472.6276

**VyStar Credit Union Earns CDFI Certification**

*With assistance from CU Strategic Planning*

[CU Strategic Planning](http://www.custrategicplanning.com/), the credit union movement’s largest organization for obtaining Community Development Financial Institutions Certification and grants from the U.S. Treasury Department, recently helped VyStar Credit Union earn its certification. VyStar, a $13 billion organization headquartered in Jacksonville, Fla., plans to leverage future CDFI grant funds it receives to expand its service in underserved and vulnerable markets.

“Earning the right to be called a Community Development Financial Institution is central to the values VyStar stands for as an organization,” Chief Lending Officer Jenny Vipperman explained. “We believe in the importance of reflecting the communities we serve, and that means meeting individuals where they are and helping improve their financial wellness with fairness, compassion and integrity. That’s why we employ a diverse, talented staff and remain committed to making our high-quality products and services available to people of all different backgrounds. It is why we also support a broad range of community partners who share in our commitment to positively impact the world around us.”

CDFI-certified lenders are eligible for [CDFI Fund](https://www.cdfifund.gov/) grants, which support generating economic growth and opportunity in some of our nation's most distressed communities. Mission-driven financial institutions that take a market-based approach to supporting economically disadvantaged communities with injections of capital into neighborhoods that lack access to financing.

Vipperman added, “Credit unions serve more rural, low-income and minority areas than other financial institutions, and it remains critical that we offer inclusive services that improve the financial lives of individuals from various geographic locations and backgrounds. We want to be a trailblazer in our industry and remove the limitations that may be holding back other credit unions. Our successes in this area encourage other credit unions to make decisions with confidence and in turn serve more underserved members.”

“VyStar truly demonstrates that credit unions continue serving their intended purpose—providing affordable financial services for people of all backgrounds, especially those who are most financially and socioeconomically disenfranchised,” CU Strategic Planning AVP of Certification Services Carrie Ostrem said. “Our work makes it easy to show up every day and unlock opportunities for credit unions and their communities. Congratulations, VyStar!”

VyStar appreciated the guidance it received from CU Strategic Planning. “We are thankful to the CU Strategic Planning team for their leadership throughout this process and look forward to fulfilling the responsibility that comes with this honor,” Vipperman concluded.

# # #

**About CU Strategic Planning**

*For more than a decade,* [*CU Strategic Planning*](https://www.custrategicplanning.com/) *has provided business planning services for credit unions with a focus on community development. The company facilitates strategic planning meetings and develops business plans in addition to being the No. 1 CDFI grant-writing firm for credit unions in the country. Through grants, strategic and tactical planning, DEI consulting, community summit facilitation and more, CU Strategic Planning achieves its mission to unlock opportunities for credit unions to change lives and their communities. CU Strategic Planning’s funding for credit unions has reached $770 million.*

**About VyStar Credit Union**

*VyStar Credit Union is the second-largest credit union headquartered in Florida and now serves over 800,000 members with assets totaling $13 billion. VyStar is the largest mortgage lender in Northeast Florida and one of the major employers in the region with over 2,000 employees. VyStar membership is open to everyone who lives or works in the 49 contiguous counties of Central to North Florida, 18 Southern Georgia counties and past and present military members and their families all over the world.*