



OPERATION HOPE RETAINS ATLANTA-BASED AUDIT FIRM TO ENSURE LEADING FINANCIAL LITERACY AND EMPOWERMENT ORGANIZATION IMPLEMENTS BEST PRACTICES

Board Confirms New Audit Firm, Fulton & Kozak, Specializing in Non-Profit and Government Sectors

ATLANTA—October 8, 2019—Operation HOPE announced today that it has retained Fulton & Kozak, LLC, an Atlanta-based CPA firm, to issue the organization’s 2018 audit, and review and resubmit its 2017 audit with updates reflecting recognized nonprofit sector best practices. Having moved to Atlanta in 2017, Operation HOPE began a review process at the request of the Board of Directors earlier this year and selected the highly respected Fulton & Kozak after a regional review. Fulton & Kozak has been in business for more than 30 years, and more than 75% of its clients are nonprofit organizations and government entities.

Our Board’s instruction six months ago to upgrade our accounting policies to reflect current industry best practices has just concluded with an agreement with Fulton & Kozak,” said Brian Betts, Chief Financial Officer, Operation HOPE. “We have also worked on a timeline to ensure that Operation HOPE maintains its full compliance with all regulations and filings in addition to submitting documentation to ensure our remaining high standing by various third-party charity rating agencies, and we anticipate this being completed in 1Q 2020.”

As part of its engagement, Fulton & Kozak’s initial review will address some technical errors of accounting allocation, requiring corrections in the 2017 audit including further refinement of accounting treatment for one program, enhanced transparency through additional disclosures on expenses, and reclassification between accounts.

Over the past year, Operation HOPE has significantly expanded the number of people it assists—some 84,500 client services have been rendered so far in 2019 through [HOPE Inside](#), a financial empowerment model created by Operation HOPE to provide no-cost financial literacy coaching and education to participants through the support of financial and corporate partners. Thus far in 2019, 14 new HOPE Inside locations have been opened, for a total of 130 operational offices in the nationwide network. The model includes HOPE Inside Adult, HOPE Inside Youth, HOPE Inside Disaster, and HOPE Inside The Workplace, an employee financial wellness program.

In 27 years, Operation HOPE has served more than 4 million individuals and directed over \$3.2 billion in economic activity into disenfranchised communities—impacting 1,467 U.S. cities and towns. Through the HOPE 700 Credit Score Communities initiative, the focus of raising client FICO scores to 700 is at the foundation of all HOPE Inside programming. Seventy-two percent of HOPE clients improve their FICO scores—35-point average—after 5.4 months, and a recent Accenture analysis reveals that Operation HOPE improves FICO scores at 2-3 times the rate of its peers.