

**BAYFIRST NATIONAL BANK SURPASSES 2022
\$100 MILLION MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESS LENDING GOAL**
*Year-Long Goal Achieved in Eight Months Under Leadership of
Recently-Promoted SVP, 225+ Businesses Impacted*

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (September 6, 2022) – Roughly eight months after St. Petersburg-based BayFirst National Bank (formerly First Home Bank) announced its Minority-Owned Business Lending Program (MOBLP) goal for 2022, the Bank’s Small Business Administration (SBA) and commercial lending divisions surpassed the \$100 million goal, with loans to women- and minority-owned businesses now exceeding \$106 million year to date.

Now in its second year, the MOBLP was launched to address the financial challenges facing minority-owned small businesses, including language and cultural barriers, lack of trust in financial institutions, red tape, financial literacy and more. The Program’s original, two-year lending goal of \$50 million was established in late 2020 and reached in August of 2021, which is when the even more ambitious goal of \$100 million for 2022 was announced.

“We originally set out to establish BayFirst as the preeminent minority business lender in Tampa Bay, and thanks to the success of our Minority Owned Business Lending we’re one step closer,” said BayFirst Community Engagement Officer Valerie Fulbright. “We’re proud to play a role in ensuring minority business owners have equal access to the funding they need to support and grow their businesses and look forward to further deepening our impact in the years to come.”

Fulbright, who was recently promoted to Senior Vice President at BayFirst, has played a pivotal role in the MOBLP’s overall success, while also spearheading the Bank’s financial literacy, Diversity Equity and Inclusion, community engagement, and volunteerism programs. In fact, the Bank largely credits the remarkable success of its MOBLP to Fulbright’s financial literacy efforts – which include sponsored community events, training programs for local businesses, special events for area children and more.

“Valerie has been instrumental in establishing the community partnerships and relationships that allow us to reach the business owners who need our support the most,” said BayFirst President Tom Zernick. “Under her leadership, the Bank has greatly advanced its corporate mission to serve those who are not getting their proportionate share of funding, and we look forward to her continued success in her new role.”