

Regions Bank Teaming with Operation HOPE to Offer Free Financial Counseling for People in Florissant, Ferguson, Jennings & Surrounding Communities

Apr 29, 2015

HOPE Inside location to focus on helping more people take charge of their finances and become stakeholders in the community

ST. LOUIS--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- In support of a stronger North St. Louis County, [Regions Bank](#) and Operation HOPE announced plans for a [HOPE Inside](#) location that will provide no-cost financial education and credit and money management counseling to underserved residents in the St. Louis area.



Bonita Williams (pictured) brings more than 10 years of experience to her new role as a HOPE Inside counselor at Regions locations in North St. Louis County. (Photo: Business Wire)

"Helping people and families understand and manage their finances makes our communities stronger," said Mike Hart, Midwest Area President for Regions Bank. "Regions is committed to providing banking services and community support in North St. Louis County, and we are excited to work with Operation HOPE to provide free, focused, one-on-one financial counseling and empowerment."

The HOPE Inside location will initially be housed in Regions' New Halls Ferry branch located at 11920 New Halls Ferry Road in Florissant. Counseling will be available beginning May 18. The HOPE Inside counseling will later move to a new Regions location that will be built along Lewis and Clark Boulevard in Jennings.

Regions is providing workspace facilities within the branches and other support for HOPE Inside, enabling a certified financial counselor from [Operation HOPE](#) to meet with clients during Regions' regular business hours. Counseling is provided free of charge and is available to the general public.

As in other locations where Regions and Operation HOPE provide this service, the counselor will work with clients to help them improve their credit scores, understand and use credit wisely, strengthen their overall financial management skills, and become better prepared to achieve homeownership, avoid foreclosure, or meet other financial goals. The free service is available regardless of whether the recipients are Regions customers.

"This is about creating a thriving economy through financial empowerment - and financial dignity," said Operation HOPE Founder, Chairman, and Chief Executive Officer John Hope Bryant. "Look at what happens in North St. Louis County when we help people improve their credit scores by 100 points or more. Think about the difference we will see as more people have a greater sense of ownership in their neighborhoods. And think about the new investment and new jobs that come to communities when people succeed financially. This is the vision we share with Regions for North St. Louis County."

HOPE Inside locations exist literally "inside" financial institutions, retail stores, supermarkets, local municipalities or community-based partners, allowing Operation HOPE to reach more people while cutting out the expensive overhead costs of running a financial education center. The HOPE Inside location at Regions will be the first HOPE Inside outreach in St. Louis County.

Bryant, who also serves on the President's Advisory Council on Financial Capability for Young Americans, added, "This is personal to me. My mother grew up in East St. Louis. I've always had a strong connection to the St. Louis area. Operation HOPE has enjoyed a productive relationship with Regions. When the opportunity came to expand our partnership to include North St. Louis County, we knew we had a chance to reach more people and have a unique and lasting impact on this community. Our hope is that other financial institutions will follow the lead of Regions Financial so we can continue to build on our momentum in the future."

Locally based counseling will be provided by Bonita Williams, who has more than 10 years of financial services experience. A St. Louis native, Williams has served clients throughout North St. Louis County for several years. Before transitioning to her new role as a HOPE Inside financial counselor with Operation HOPE, Williams worked for Regions Bank to provide financial education programs and additional services for low-to-moderate-income clients. Williams holds a Bachelor of Science degree in consumer economics from the University of Missouri and a Master of Business Administration degree from Lindenwood University.

Members of the public interested in participating in HOPE Inside counseling or workshops can learn more through the HOPE Inside section of the Operation HOPE website at www.operationhope.org/hopeinside or can email Williams beginning May 4 at bonita.williams@operationhope.org.

About Regions Financial Corporation

Regions Financial Corporation (NYSE:RF), with \$122 billion in assets, is a member of the S&P 500 Index and is one of the nation's largest full-service providers of consumer and commercial banking, wealth management, mortgage, and insurance products and services. Regions serves customers in 16 states across the South, Midwest and Texas, and through its subsidiary, Regions Bank, operates approximately 1,650 banking offices and 2,000

ATMs. Regions Bank is an Equal Housing Lender. Additional information about Regions and its full line of products and services can be found at www.regions.com.

About Operation HOPE

Founded in 1992 and headquartered in Los Angeles, Operation HOPE is rated a 4-star charity by Charity Navigator. A global nonprofit focused on financial dignity, HOPE has empowered more than 2.5 million individuals and directed more than \$1.8 billion in private capital to America's low-wealth communities. Through its three core divisions and HOPE Financial Dignity Forum, the organization has provided youth and adult financial literacy, economic preparedness, and digital empowerment, and has promoted homeownership and assisted with foreclosure prevention for more than 2.2 million individuals, families, and small business owners worldwide. Currently, HOPE is focused on [Project 5117](#), a multi-year initiative that will track and increase business role models for youth, boost credit scores for adults, and empower underserved communities. To learn more about Operation HOPE, visit www.operationhope.org, follow HOPE on Twitter: @OperationHOPE, like HOPE on Facebook: Operation HOPE, or follow on Instagram: @OperationHOPEHQ.

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Source: Regions Financial Corporation

News Provided by Acquire Media

