

**Organization Highlights**

- Timeframe/years for the organization highlights: 2017
- Jobs created or retained: 1,916
- Businesses assisted: 3,668
- Individuals provided with financial counseling and literacy training: 3,368
- Total dollar amount loaned: \$ 29,900,000

**Contact**

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LiftFund transforms lives by opening doors, leveling the financial playing field, and building a community of shared success. LiftFund was founded as Accion Texas in 1994 by Janie Barrera. Since that time, it has provided 20,000 loans totaling over \$280 million.

LiftFund provides more than small business loans; they provide confidence, guidance and assurance to the thousands of small business owners they serve yearly through seminars and consultation services. LiftFund’s mission is to provide credit and support to new and existing entrepreneurs who have limited access to traditional sources for a business loan.

Since certification, LiftFund has received \$19.1 million in awards from the CDFI Fund. These awards have allowed LiftFund to lend and invest in low-income and economically distressed areas throughout its thirteen state footprint, helping hardworking entrepreneurs support their families, grow their businesses, and contribute to their communities.

**Bayou City Interpreting**

At a young age, Sophie Macey learned American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with her deaf cousin, Yasmin, and forged lasting friendships with other deaf children throughout her time in school. Upon graduating, Sophie’s aunt encouraged her to pursue an ASL career and follow her passion of bridging the gap between the deaf and hearing communities.

Sophie became ASL certified in 2008 and interpreted in various industries. While interpreting at an elementary school, she witnessed the high turnover and poor quality of interpreters working with the students. Sophie knew something had to change.

In 2017, she opened Bayou City Interpreting, an ASL interpreting agency dedicated to providing classrooms with quality interpreters. After a successful semester, Sophie hired six interpreters to meet the needs of her clients. Unfortunately, that was the same time Hurricane Harvey hit and the school districts closed. With bills and employees to pay, Sophie wasn’t sure how her business would survive.



**Project Highlights**

- Median Household Income: \$37,257
- \$54,727 Unemployment Rate: 7%
- Poverty Rate: 18.5% compared to state at 16.7%
- FEMA designated County post Hurricane Harvey
- Jobs created or retained: 6

“They weren’t processing our invoices,” Sophie said. “We were in a hard place... We were denied by our bank and our credit union. [Our business was] only nine months old, and even though we could show them ‘Hey, we have money coming in,’ it just isn’t here yet, nobody would lend to us.”

Sophie continued searching for funds and found LiftFund through her local Chamber of Commerce. “I was approved for the full \$25,000 literally the day before payroll was due,” she said. “It really was like a Christmas miracle.”

Today Sophie and Bayou City Interpreting are doing what they do best: connecting students and communities through high quality and dedicated sign language services. “It is my dream to one day be able to take on other school districts,” she said.