

Dan Delehanty:
35 Years Building What
Others Can Grow On

OUR NEW BOARD CHAIR HAS BEEN PART OF THIS JOURNEY SINCE OUR INCEPTION.

More than 25 years ago, Dan Delehanty walked into a small office on Havemeyerenry Meyer Street in Brooklyn, New York. It was Ascendus New York's early days (ACCION East). Microfinance in the United States was barely a concept. Dan was already in.

He'd spent nine years at microfinance NGO Trickle Up as Deputy Executive Director, running microfinance programs in Africa and was researching programs in the US. He'd seen what happens when capital reaches the right hands at the right time. That experience shaped everything that came after.

“There’s an immediacy for delivering capital to entrepreneurs. It’s a very immediate benefit. You’re coming in with a value add that’s critical to person as they’re trying to grow their business or tackle an immediate cash need.”

— Dan Delehanty, Board Chair, Ascendus and CRA Director with Metropolitan Commercial Bank

A decade leading Community Development Banking at Capital One, a role at Grameen America, senior CRA positions at Dime Community Bank and OceanFirst Bank, and today, CRA and Fair Banking Director at Metropolitan Commercial Bank. More than 35 years across the nonprofit, government, and banking sectors — and **through all of it, the same question: how do we make sure the institutions we build actually reach the people who need them most?**

That question is what brought him to our board nine years ago. As a lender, a donor, a volunteer. Two years as Vice Chair. And now, as our Board Chair. Along the way, he's been with us through the 2008 financial crisis, through COVID, and through the current economic uncertainty. The mission has never changed.

“If you give a small business owner access to that capital, they deploy it immediately in a way that adds value, not only to the business, but to their families and local community.”

As Chair, Dan is focused on maintaining strong governance, and an inclusive board where every voice matters, and a clear succession plan. He's working side by side with Vice Chair Amy Hellen, who will step into the Chair role in 2027. It's a transition we're building together, with intention.

"We don't want to get in the way. We want to add value."

We asked Dan what makes Ascendus different from the many nonprofits he's worked with. His answer was immediate: the people. A team that has grown with the organization. People who

"We've not only retained key people, we've helped them grow, which ultimately I think is how an organization is sustainable and really fires on all cylinders. It's not about one dynamic leader or two dynamic leaders. It's about the full bench."

— Dan Delehanty, Board Chair, Ascendus

And then there's the impact that keeps Dan coming back: a client who improves their credit score by 100 points in nine months. A business owner who finally accesses affordable capital. A family whose financial health shifts in real time.

"Being a business owner is difficult and it can be very isolating and very lonely. And having a support network around them beyond family and friends with the capital and the guidance, that's a critical component for helping people ascend and continue to move up that ladder."

— Dan Delehanty, Board Chair, Ascendus

Twenty-five years after that first visit to Havemeyer Street, Dan is still here and championing Ascendus. In the next nine months, he'll make sure the path is ready for the next person to lead. And then he'll keep doing what he's always done: finding ways to add value. We're proud to have him guiding us forward.



