Financial Capability and Asset Building for the A&O Network

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Carmen Shorter: Hello and thank you everyone for joining us for today's webinar. We're glad to have you. We're going to be talking today about financial capability and asset building for the A&O Network specifically the AFI Funding Opportunity. My name is Carmen Shorter and I'm the Senior Manager for Learning with the field engagement team at CFED. At CFED, I oversee the trainings including webinars for the assets and opportunity network and the tax payer opportunity network. With us today, we also have Parker Cohen who's Associate Director with the savings of financial capability team at CFED. In that role, Parker provides project management, technical assistance for community organizations, and also provides research and writing for various projects on financial capability tools for adults and children. Jessica Junke has been a part of Neighborhood Partnerships team since 2011 and as the Associate Director, as a Director of Economic Opportunity, as Oregon's IDA Initiative which is the largest state program of its kind in the country. Jess brings with her closely a decade of experience building efficient systems to support work being done on the ground. Also today, we've got Trevor Hoffberger with AFI. He's a Technical Assistance Provider with the Assets for Independence or AFI Resource Center. Trevor provides guidance on application process and navigating the funding opportunity announcement. Trevor has been with the AFI Resource Center since October 2015 and also performs outreach analysis for the Resource Center. Prior to this role with AFI, Trevor is experienced working within range of nonprofits, schools, and government entities. And so, with that I'll turn things over to Trevor.

Trevor Hoffberger: Great. Thank you so much. First of all, I'd like to give you a little bit of logistic information about webinar. The webinar is being recorded and will be available on our website along with the presentation. All participants have been muted at this point to ensure sound quality. If you have any questions before and during the question and answer portion, you can go to the Q&A panel on the right-hand side of your screen, type in the question and click send. If you request a copy of the slides, contact the AFI Resource Center by email at info@IDAresources.org or by calling 1-866-778-6037. That information is on your screen right now and will be available on … throughout the presentation. For the first part of our agenda, I'd like to discuss the ins-and-outs of AFI.

Before we get started, I'd like to learn a little bit more about you all and of you knowledge of AFI to this point. So, I'm actually going to open up a poll question on your screen and how familiar are you with the AFI program? Or you're not familiar at all, somewhat familiar, very familiar. We're going about 20 seconds to give an answer in. Awesome, looks like everyone here or most everyone is fairly new to Assets for Independence. Some people are somewhat familiar and we have a few people who are very familiar with the process.

So, Assets for Independence, for those of you who are unfamiliar with it, it's a discretionary grant program administered by the Office of Community Service in the Administration for Children and Families which is a part of the US Department of Health & Human Services. ACF promotes the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals and communities through programs such Head Start, TANF, CSBG. AFI was created by Congress in 1998 to demonstrate and support an assets-based approach for increasing the economic self-sufficiency of low-income individuals and families. Asset building as many of you may be aware it's an anti-poverty approach that supports the acquisition of assets to increase opportunity, build wealth and increase economic stability for low-income families. These assets can be tangible such as a home or intangible such as education as you'll hear a little bit more about later.

AFI funds projects that provide Individual Development Accounts—you'll hear me refer to them IDAs—and related services to low-income people. IDAs are matched savings accounts with a specific goal of purchasing an asset. So, these IDAs may be used for one of three allowable assets. To purchase a first home, capitalize a business or fund post-secondary education or training. The Assets for Independence program is authorized to award AFI grants to the following entities. Non-profit entities with 501(c)(3) status, state or local government agencies or tribal government applying jointly with a non-profit with that 501(c)(3) status, financial institutions that are federally certified as either a Low-Income Credit Union or a Community Development Financial Institution that demonstrate a collaborative relationship with a local community-based organization whose activities are designed to address poverty, and finally, entities deemed eligible under Section 405(g) of the AFI grant specifically the Indiana housing and community development authority in the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. As I said, AFI is a discretionary grant program. So, grants are awarded on a competitive basis and there's typically more than one competition per fiscal year and the program is implemented by grantees meaning participants have no direct contact with the government. Organizations can have more than one AFI grant at a time. In 2014, approximately $10 million has awarded these grants with 44 grants being made. The maximum award is $1,000,000 and the minimum award is $10,000 and grants do have a five year period and full funding is available upon that award. Organizations will apply for a range of award amounts as we'll talk about a little bit later.

So, now we'll shift into talking about kind of how AFI works from the perspective of both a grantee and the participant of that program and we'll start with a participant's perspective. So, let's say that Kim would like to purchase her first home. An AFI grantee in her community determines that Kim is eligible and opens her IDA. So, the AFI grantee matches Kim's savings at a rate of $2 for every $1 that she saves. And this isn't on the slide but let's say there's a local homeownership program for which Kim can purchase her home with $6,000 for a down payment and closing calls. For three years Kim saves $55 per month of her earned income working towards a goal of $2,000 in her IDA. During this time, she receives tax assistance, financial education and homeownership preparation from the AFI grantee and its partners. So, Kim saves her $2,000 and purchases her home using her savings, that $2,000 plus $4,000 from the AFI grantee and within that $4,000, $2,000 is federal and $2,000 is non-federal cash contribution which we'll explain in further detail here on the next slide. So, we can see this scenario a little bit more visually here. At the end of those three years, Kim has saved $2,000 which will be matched with $2,000 federal coming from AFI and $2,000 non-federal matching funds. Match dating so the expanded Kim's buying power and she uses the $6,000 to purchase her home.

I'll keep this slide up for a minute, I think it helps visualize how the program works. A little bit more on the mechanics of IDAs. Federally-supported IDAs are not counted against or not counted as an asset for federal aid programs. So, it won't impact your eligibility in those cases. Participants can withdraw from the program at any time and take their personal savings with them. That's the money they have saved on their own. Only interest earned on participant's personal savings is potentially taxable and finally, these are set up as custodial account at this federally-insured financial institution. So, who can participate in an AFI project? Who are the individuals who could become participants? First, it could be or these grantees are required to determine whether perspective participants meet the federal eligibility requirements for participation in the AFI projects prior to enrollment in the project. Section 408 of the AFI Act limits eligibilities for participation on AFI funded projects as follows. So, first it could be an individual who is a member of a household that is eligible for assistance under the state's TANF program or an individual who's a member of the household that meets both of the following requirements. The first is the Income Test: it says that the adjusted gross income of the household is equal to or less than 200% of the federal poverty guidelines or the earned income tax credit limits. And there's the Net Worth test. The net worth of the household at the end of the calendar year preceding the determination of eligibility must not exceed $10,000 and that excludes the value of primary residence and one vehicle.

Now, switching gears a little bit to the grantee's perspective. We'll look at this in three broad categories. The project start-up, the behind the scenes work and engaging and supporting your savers. There's not an exhaustive list of this stuffs that would be necessary but some of the key steps that we wanted to convey. Also know that some of these items doesn't bold our AFI program requirements so they also could have requirements that directly impact them. So, one of the highlight doesn't bring them your attention. For the project start-up, grantees will need to activate partners with one or more federally insured financial institution. They'll work with the applicant to establish and maintain the project reserve fund of the participant IDAs, the business capitalization accounts applicable as well as other project partners. Grantees will need to establish that project reserve fund, deposit non-federal cash contribution and draw down their federal AFI funds, developing trained staff on program policies and procedures, develop program materials and marketing pieces, set up data management system to be used by the applicants and its partners. To engage and support savers, grantees will need to perform outreach to the target population and recruit those eligible participants. And then finally, and then again [inaudible] these participants including determining their eligibility and ability to save that earned income for an allowable asset purchase, and establishing a savings time agreement with participants, and work with them to implement the plans including opening those IDAs, supporting participant saving progress.

Continuing on the next slide, periodically matching participant savings so not less than once every three months, grantees must deposit these saving contributions in the purchase of these IDAs or into a parallel account maintained by the grantee. In doing business capitalization IDAs, you need to develop systems to have qualified entities review the participant business plans, assist participants in obtaining skills and information necessary to achieve economic self-sufficiency, provide others supportive services or just tax preparation assistance, and conduct activities for retaining participants in the project so they may make an asset purchase, such as supporting participants who have difficulty making savings deposits or otherwise abiding with them with the terms of their plan agreement, and finally approving the process qualified emergency withdrawals and approving the process asset purchases, then celebrating those successes with your participants.

I should mention that while this does seem like a long list of activities, many of these tasks around supporting savers can be done by partners as well as the grantees especially with regards to recruitment and providing the supportive services. So, now that you've heard a little bit more about how the actual grant program works and the IDAs are set up I'd like to turn it over to Jessica Junke who is the Director of Economic Opportunities at Neighborhood Partnerships and she's going to talk a little bit about how they have used both AFI and IDAs in general to support their participants.

Jessica Junke: Thank you. Hi everyone, my name is Jessica and I'm going to talk a little bit first about my organization that I represent, Neighborhood Partnerships. We were founded in 1989 of a statewide 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that works with the intersection of program delivery and policy change across a range of issues areas. In that work, we work collaboratively to catalyze the NH research back to initiative system and policy changes that help Oregonians … ability and build financial security. One of our key partnerships is with Oregon Housing and Community Services who we work with to manage the Oregon IDA Initiative which is a state, primarily a state funded IDA Initiative. Neighborhood Partnership contracts with 10 initiative partners to work directly with clients in all parts of the state. Two of our partners CASA of Oregon and NeighborWork Umpqua work with network of partner organization while our other partners work primarily directly with NP. So, I do have a flowchart of our network that will help illustrate how our state funds match up with our federal funds through AFI for Independence. So, before we get there, I just wanted to talk really briefly around why AFI and Neighborhood Partnerships and our partners through the IDA Initiative believe in the power of programs like IDAs to begin addressing the asset poverty in communities across our state. Oregon recognize the potential in IDAs AFI, the original AFI budget … in 1998 and we mirrored our own state legislation on it in 1999. So, those two pieces of legislation really work well together in many ways. For the actual program, the pairing of the financial education and state incentive along with intensive coaching and counseling leads to big impact for individuals as they begin making progress and building financial capability for their household. AFI allowed us in Oregon to leverage our state IDA resources to achieve greater impacts for participants and communities. So, the next slide is, are, it's the flowchart I referenced. And this helps illustrate how the Oregon IDA Initiative is funded on the state level through our state-wide tax credits. After our successful 2015 legislative session last year, we actually lowered our tax credits to 70% which will hopefully allow us to raise more funds for future program years. I did include the updated flowchart here but the premise is the same. So, the state fund acts as our non-federal match in order to access and draw down Assets for Independence, AFI funds which is one of the primary driver for the breathe quality of IDA Services across Oregon. So, if anyone is interested in learning more about how our state tax credit works, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. I don't have enough time to go into that on this webinar but I'm happy to have a follow up conversation.

So, through the 10 grantees that you see on the screen, the state program reaches every county in Oregon and more than 100 partner agencies or IDA providers are actively working with clients across the state. So, one last thing to know, on this side while, ask the specific questions, I will speak directly from Neighbor Partnerships, AFI Funding Perspective which we use through four partners in the Oregon IDA Initiative, College Dreams, NEDCO, IRCO and Portland Housing Center on the flowchart. I will most often be referencing the whole state-wide network which includes all of the organizations that you see. Several of whom are their own independent AFI grantees.

In general, all data on the following five are for that more global perspective of this whole IDA Initiative and many of those participants is not. The majority of those participants are also AFI clients for multiple AFI grantees. So, on this slide, we're going to start looking into the data and this is where we'll respond to really the question of who are our IDA participants in Oregon. And these slides come from our state-wide evaluation which beyond of the 3rd party evaluation through Portland State University in 2008. Our evaluation plan be the management systems align so our partners are cleaning the data at least quarterly. And more recently, here at Neighborhood Partnerships, we brought the evaluation … to work with our partners and participants to refine our current systems as well as better capture the impact IDAs are having for communities across the state. These five specifically show the distribution of types of IDAs across age group and many of the things that you see on these following slides might be pretty logical, that many of our education savers are younger folks who are getting ready to go to college, and for business and homeownerships they were tend to be older, other different place in their asset building trajectory. This next slide illustrates the distribution of IDAs across age groups and race in Oregon. The top row in each section reflect [inaudible] of Oregonians below 200% poverty and the second row reflect how well we are serving those age groups in each category. I'm sharing this to simply show how we desegregate data to examine how equitable our coverage is across communities and these sides in particular spur of conversation around our presence with Asian Oregonians and young Black Oregonians. So, in response, we've redirected funding to new pilots in an effort to begin building better access for those folks and then as you'll see on this slide our evaluation was originally set up to break out race and ethnicity on separate categories. Latinos are included on this slide as far as long you're serving on across age. This following slide with the education level at enrollment, just for a moment and you'll notice the education savers most often come up, come in to the program with less than a high school degree. In Oregon this is mainly because most of our savers are saving for their education and begin the program before they receive their high school degree. So, if you remember the previous slide, we had several, a big chunk of our clients who were under the age of 18. You've also noticed that with business savers with more than a four year degree [inaudible] an interesting data point as we're grappling with kind of new economic era after the recession. So, on this slide, it breaks down on gender. The majority of our participants tend to be women although with men, there's a slightly larger proportion for business savers and then slide shows how we've grown over the past, really almost the past decade in this data. So, in the past five years, our savers have nearly doubled. So, we are, we are very busy in Oregon currently. This is how our savings categories are broken out so in more recent years, we've seen many more savers interested in going in saving for school whether that's going back to school or saving for the first time and home purchases while they have continued to increase, they haven't been increasing at the same trajectory and we sometimes we often wonder, you know, how that connects with the housing market here in Oregon. So, if you'd like to dig in to Oregon's data more robustly, please don't hesitate to reach out and I can put you on contact with our data analyst. She'd be happy to talk with anyone about what we're doing here in Oregon evaluation wide. Then moving along to what our program was like, um, the trajectory bullet points are all, are most common practice however, there are some projects that have a different framework and needs a better support community's facing this proportionate barriers to economic stability. So, for instance your community is experiencing higher levels of poverty, we may increase the matching rate at a pilot that those participants could make smaller personal deposits but better fit within their budget and still reach the same goal as someone who may be able to make a bigger deposit within their budget. So, this is just kind of typically a three to one matching rate $2,000 here in Oregon, this participant tends to save $2,000 dollars to be matched with $6,000 which is $2,000 is AFI as we go back to that previous part but then they would actually get $4,000 in state fund so, for a total of $8,000 towards their asset purchase. They didn't carry at least six months on average that tends to be around 18 months although most participants, their goal is three years and many of our participants find that as they are saving, it becomes easier overtime and so that might be something that contributes to a shorter timeframe. The last three bullet points are really in reference to how our state-wide network is structured which all federal dollars folded in. So, on a day to day at neighborhood partnerships, we tend to largely set an administrative role working closely with the state to direct the whole initiative and as well as providing an ongoing technical assistance towards state-wide network at the grantee level – so often that's the direct IDA provider. It tends to be more administration related to things like plan and case management – so that would be things like file management and database management as well as the direct services related to coaching and financial education on the ground renovation and things like that looking up that innovation to Neighborhood Partnerships so we can pull that in across the state. As far as time goes here in Oregon typically tends to be that at Neighborhood Partnerships and at our direct grantees that there at least one fulltime IDA staff person that's dedicated to just IDAs or the equivalent spread out over multiple positions. At the sub-grantee, it really depends on the volume of accounts. Some of our partners have five or 10 accounts while others have as many as several hundred accounts. So, depending on the volume of accounts, that's the funding and time follows that the smaller tends to be less time dedicated and then the bigger ones that tends to be more. And then again, as you can imagine with a hundred partners across the state, that can look very differently. But from a global perspective, IDAs at Neighborhood Partnerships started collecting data. Through the evaluation, the total dollars saved by participants is more than $9.2 million, total match earned is more than $25.7 million. We're very proud of those numbers and they have really increased in recent years. For all of our partners here in Oregon, we have accessed $11.3 million from the AFI program. So, I just wanted to show that that these numbers are blue sky bill that we're really, really proud of but they started out with very modest initial grants awarded when our legislation was passed more than 15 years ago. So, these reflect 15 years of IDA programming here in Oregon. So, I just hope that people on the call see this and are inspired by it and know that there are small steps that lead to this kind of robust programming. And for Neighborhood Partnerships as a direct AFI grantee we've received $900,000 of that $11.3 million. So, there is really a collaborative. There are partners all across the state.

So, lessons learned. There are lots of benefits that we felt of hosting an IDA program. Most of those benefits are directly to the client and to communities but from the organizational perspective, our state-wide network of partners working in financial capability has been really fabulous as far as sharing resources and lessons with each other, working together as a state-wide collaborative to achieve financial stability for communities all across Oregon led us to have a really robust set of experts towards sharing wisdom and really helping move the dial on other related policies and programming that all leads to stronger, more financially healthy communities. My second bullet point is for lack of a better word, IDAs are really magic for people regardless of your background politically or demographically speaking there tends to be something within the program that you latch on to. We also have of course documented impacts of IDAs in how they are changing communities which has really helped us in some conversations changed the trajectory on some major reactions to public benefits program and we really start helping people understand how we've programmed or supporting folks, exchanging the conversation and that's very exciting. And then increased creativity in Oregon because we have such a robust funding mechanism has really allowed our partners to think creatively and not only about IDAs but also related programs and how they link together in a line. These four challenges are just some that we've experienced. Limited funding, so not necessarily on a global budget perspective but on specifically the funds that are restricted for operating. It can be, it can be a little bit difficult. You have to be really creative and build efficient systems in the beginning that will last sustainably overtime. Partnerships for financial institutions can sometimes be difficult as it varies from banks to banks often. How you can set up accounts and how you can report on the data. To me, here in Oregon goes with federal legislation but also going to be a legislation which are not perfectly aligned anymore after 15 years. Managing data, when you get to thousands of accounts, the database really, it's important that it's able to keep up with your partners on the ground and we're not, we're using currently has proven that it's, has limited capacity in servings as robust a network as we have. And then coordinating very diverse programs across the state also is a challenge but it's something that we lean into full heartedly so we can build programs that are responses to community's needs. Another challenge initially was recruitment and that's something that especially as a new AFI grantee, you'll probably experience people often thought it was too good to be true and enrollment were tough initially but a few years back here in Oregon, we've hit a tipping point and now our reality is people know that this is a real thing. We can't get funding fast enough to meet us in the end.

These questions, I just want for you all to chew on. I'm not suggesting that whether your answer is yes or no means that there's a definitive answer to whether or not you should apply to AFI. I sincerely believe that one of the amazing things about IDAs is that with appropriate resources, they can sit in almost any model. Here in Oregon, we've had successful IDA programs in high schools, in social service agencies and community centers, and then juvenile detention centers. The point of this slide is that each of these questions has impacted directly here in Oregon. The direction we've been able to go to navigate the different layers of legislation and funder of expectations but in the end, if you can pull it off and you have the fast capacity to do it, it's totally worth it for the members of the communities you serve. I think I'm done with all of them but anyone wants to talk further, I am absolutely available.

Trevor Hoffberger: Awesome. Thank you Jess and we will bring everybody's contact information up on the last slide of the presentation. So, if you do want to get in touched with anyone in particular, you can absolutely do that. And for now, what I'd like to do is share some other factors to consider when determining whether to apply for AFI. So, just answer on a couple questions you might want to consider to think if you're a good fit for the program and hopefully we can touch on some other points here. The first requirement to look at is in regards to cost sharing. So, grantees are required to finance their projects with a combination of federal AFI grant and cash from one or more non-federal sources as I've said earlier. The total project budget of the sum of the federal AFI grant and that non-federal cash contribution specifically the federal AFI grant must comprise no more than 50% of the total project budget. For example, a grantee that receives $300,000 and federal grant funds must provide at least an equal of $300,000 in cash for the project for a total project budget of $600,000. Federal funds can be used to meet the AFI cash requirement only if those federal funds have specific statutory authority to be used to meet matching requirements and other federal programs. So, you want to be sure of the money that you are using to make sure it is eligible. Applicants must have commitments of cash from, I'm sorry, of cash support from those non-federal services of the time of application. So, you want those

MIUs and such in place when applying and in kind is not counted against the cost sharing requirement. After considering some of those key requirements, you will likely want to think about the project budget. In doing so, you may want to consider the number of accounts that you want to be able to offer. How many people you expect to serve and the match that you want to offer which may be determined by your target population. So, note of the matter, it is up to you. Some grantees actually vary their match rate by each asset goal. So, you're not limited to say a three to one or two to one match rate. Another program requirement described in the FOA, the Funding Opportunity Announcement, is the limitation on uses of funds. So, take a look at this now.

Per section, 407 of the AFI act, grantees must expend at least 85% of the project fund. So, remember this is for federal AFI grant and then non-federal funds. We got 85% to match participant savings only. Then the remaining 15% has specific ways that it can be used. There's 2% for data collection and other information for evaluation, 5.5% for non-administrative functions such as helping participants with economic literacy, budgeting and kind of counseling, 7.5% for an admin cost provided that the combined administrative and non-administrative expenditures do not exceed 13% of the AFI grant fund. The next key requirement is about grantees matching participants or an income IDA deposits with the project funds. When they're developing the project, grantees will set the match rate that their project will offer and it can be between a one to one match on participant savings up to an eight to one match on participant savings. So, in other words if someone is going to save a thousand dollars and you matched them with a thousand dollars, that's a one to one match. If someone is going to say $500 and you matched it $4,000, well that's an eight to one match and in terms of setting that match rate, no more than $2,000 from one AFI grant may be provided to one individual and no more than $4,000 to one household. But, if you think about it, that's just the AFI grant money. Remember, you're also carrying that non-federal fund. So, that actually comes to be a limit of $4,000 per individual or $8,000 per household. And in terms of matching purchase savings, there's a requirement that no less than once every three months, grantees must deposit the matching funds that the participant have earned into their IDA or into a parallel account maintained by the grantee and their project reserve funds which we'll talk about in a minute. Project reserve funds may count as a federal account. So now that we've given you some parameters to think about how much you'll be seeking, let's look at some likely sources.

So to get started the first question that I would ask is aside from the IDA account holders themselves, who else shares the goals of your asset building program? On the broadest level, who shares the goal of financially empowering low-income people? And then specifically, who shares the goal of getting low-income people into homes, into business, and to education? So, really what I'm asking is who benefits in your success? The people in groups who, this could apply to in the public or the private sector, on the private sector side, lenders definitely benefit from when people take out loans for new ventures or any mortgage loans because they're going to make money off of that. And then education training institutes benefit because there are more demand from students. And so I'd ask you to think about how you can ask them to support the success of AFI projects that will intern benefit their success. On the public sector side, of course there's local government and the community development world. There are developers that are for example working with public financing to develop new housing project and they have set aside for low-income home buyers and maybe even though they've sort of affordable housing prices on those units, they may still have trouble finding home buyers who are qualified to get a mortgage. So, if they partner with you and support your IDA project and that's going to help them build a pipeline of eligible and ready buyers because they know there's affordable housing units will be taken off their hand at the end of the project.

The next question I would ask is who is already funding this type of work and what existing sources of funding can be leveraged. Literally, who is already providing assistance to low-income people to invest in these assets? Is there a department in your local or county government that is using CDGB funds to provide down payment assistance for low-income home buyers? If that's the case you might want to have a conversation with them about supporting their AFI program with those CDGB dollars because that way they can double the impact that their dollars are having by supporting their AFI projects because they're also leveraging the federal AFI funding. Another very direct example is scholarships that are being offered to low-income students. These funds are already being used for the same purposes of an AFI IDA. So, the scholarship provider would want to partner with you to double their scholarship funds available. Pairing the funding with financial education and [inaudible] can be appealing too. We cannot go to the education institutions committees to ask for funds to AFI projects and also standalone college access programs using the AFI to double their available scholarship funds. So, the next slide shows the sources of non-federal funds that are the most common among current AFI grantees and pretty much stays the same year after year. Financial institutions and their foundations are still at the top in terms of being the most common source of funding followed by the state and local tribal government and then United Way and other foundations.

These are just some of the most common cases where AFI grantees use these sources. They vary by locations. So, I would like to emphasize a few sources from this list. On the right-hand side locally-based corporations and employers, places of worship and larger religious charities and local business associations or industry sectors. And there's been the most common that we see show up, it's not exhaustive but we do see a lot of people partnering with groups on the left-hand side of your screen in particular. And now that you know about the requirements of the AFI program, you can examine the fit that your organization has and the target population. When thinking about your organization, do you have experience in administering AFI projects or similar programs helping low-income people pursue their goals of homeownership, secondary education or business development? More questions to ask yourself, do you have capacity to implement projects that includes partners? Do you have the resources available for the project? This refers not just to the availability, an ability to raise the required nonfederal cash contribution but also the funds to operate the program. It often helps to layer an AFI IDA project with an existing on asset purchase programming. And finally, do you have sufficient account and financial record systems? In considering your service area and the target population, is there a good number that would likely be eligible and show interest in the allowable asset purchases? Also, what's the viability of the proposed project which regard to the asset purchases included in the design? This includes things like the cost of homeownership and the availability of post-secondary programs.

For now, I'll talk a little bit more about the Funding Opportunity Announcement. You may have heard me earlier refer to it as the FOA. In early 2015, OCS released a new Funding Opportunity Announcement for the Assets for Independence program. The purposes of FOA is to explain the activity of the program. Grantees are expected to deliver on the criteria by which applications for funding will be reviewed. Anyone who is interested in applying for AFI should download the FOA from the link shown here and read it thoroughly. The next application due date is coming up fairly soon, May 13, 2016, but there are also application due dates expected or definitely in October 2016 and April 2017 and those dates are available if you follow those links there. So, if AFI does feel like a good fit for you and your organization and your community, here are some next steps to take, to make it a reality.

First, share information about AFI with agency leadership, partners and staff. Second, contact the AFI Resource Center for a copy of the AFI Application Kit and third, attend the other perspective grantee webinars. These are posted on our website. The instruction of the 2016 FOA have those key differences from [inaudible] fellows and important point to keep in mind as you develop an application. A webinar is helpful for first time and returning applicants. Also the developing resources and partners webinar offers considerations for developing partnerships for financial and other types of support who also a AFI's non-federal cash fund. And finally another webinar to consider is preparing and submitting an AFI application and you can also see here Intensive Coaching Cohorts. So, if you follow that second link there are transcripts available from previous coaching cohorts which are constant calls that potential and current applicants discussing kind of how they're navigating the application process, answering each other's questions and providing best practices to each other. So, those are really helpful resources when put in together in application.

The AFI Resource Center as I said earlier, is the access point for the AFI program technical assistance. Our website and grantee locator, the grantee locator is wonderful tool if you are trying to track down someone who has done AFI work in your area in the past and you can kind of ask them about how they have gone through the application process or navigated the actual grant itself. Additionally, the helpdesk information is available here: 1-866-778-6037 or email. We are happy to answer any questions you might have following the webinar. On that note, the first question I have for you at the end of the webinar is how likely are you to apply for AFI in the next two years? And the reason I say two years is I know that it is certainly a process and there are a lot of things to consider here. so, just, you know, you can, you can click here how likely are you to apply for AFI in the next two years? And someone asked earlier if there's anything you need to do after hitting the button and the answer is no, there's no submit button. Typically if you just hit the number, you will get yours done. Awesome, thank you so much, again on the poll, looks like a lot of people are very interested and also kind of the middle road, we'd like to hear some more information about AFI before making that decision. Before we open up the Q&A, I'm actually going to turn it over to Parker Cohen and he is going to talk a little bit more about the building financial capability guide. Parker, you can take it away.

Parker Cohen: Great, thank you Trevor. And Trevor noted I'm Parker Cohen, I'm an Associate Director of the financial capability team at CFED and many of you network members are likely familiar with this resource Building Financial Capability Planning Guide for the Integrated Services. I'm going to give you a brief overview and discuss how it can be useful for you and your work and also potentially as an AFI grantee, how it can be useful. So, what we refer to as the planning guide is an interactive guide that helps you develop a comprehensive plan for integrating financial capability services into existing programs. So, this is designed for social service agencies. So, it could a housing agency, a TANF agency, a workforce development agency, health center etc. but thinking about ways to maximize their program outcome and their client's financial outcome at the same time. And it's also useful for organizations that exclusively provide financial capability services because it gives you a lot of information to allow you to be able to work with those social service agencies to be able to integrate services. So, this was developed by us, CFED, in conjunction with the Administration for Children and Families which is subagencies to the Department of Health and Human Services. So, you know, as I notice any nonprofit or government entity and some private entities who serve low-income communities who provide social services could find this useful and it's really aimed at program managers and directors of these organizations or that have enough influence within your organization to affect change but also aren't necessarily so high up within your organization that they can't work directly on the ground. And, you know, we talked a lot about integration at CFED and we really needed meeting clients where they are to address multiple interrelated challenges. For instance, if a client is at a housing organization, it may make sense to connect them with a homeownership IDA if they are employed and in a position to be able to save to buy a home. And there's a lot of wonderful evidence out there that adding financial capability services in conjunction with existing social service programs can really help enhance the outcomes of the many program. So, for instance there's a lot of evidence in the workforce space that adding financial coaching to the job search process and other workforce development services like job coaching really maximizes the outcomes of the employment program, the core service that the agency is trying to provide. All right, next slide please. Thank you.

So, the guide is actually made up of 13 field tests and practical tools that will walk you step by step during the integration planning process and, and so this starts at understanding your client's basic financial need. So, the guide will help you think through and, and learn how you're able to discover what those needs are and what sorts of financial capability services can help your clients reach the outcomes that you're looking for them to have. It also allows you to access resources internally and externally available for providing financial capability services. It helps you determine after that how you'll be able to provide those services. So, whether you'll do it yourself in-house or whether you'll partner with another agency to do so or, or simply make a referral to an outside agency to provide financial capability services for your client. It also has tools to help you develop in-house capacity, develop successful partnerships and referral systems and also there's what we call a crosscutting tool that can work with any of the sections that helps you make the case for internal or external stakeholders. So, this is if you're trying to get buy-in from your board or your executive leadership. There's a making the case tool to help you do that, same thing for making the case for external partners to work with you to provide services. So, this is what the guide looks like and it's a really cool interactive PDF that you can click through and jump to different points. It's not like a standard PDF that you have to scroll through entirely that you're able to download tools directly from this. They may be tools that are already filled out with sample information or blank ones that you could fill out yourself. There're lots of options – very customizable to your experience and how you're trying to integrate services.

Finally, I want to refer you to a training of video series on the plan and guide that we just put out in conjunction with ACF and once this presentation gets circulated to all the attendees, you'll be able to click on this link and go watch these videos. These videos are really helpful in terms of giving you a good understanding of what the guide is and how you can use it. So, that's it for my piece. Well, I'll turn it back over to Trevor but I'm happy to answer any questions you have about the guide.

Trevor Hoffberger: Awesome, thanks Parker. This is a great transition into the Q&A actually. So, again as you can see on the right-hand side of your screen, there is a Q&A box where you can type questions on the bottom. We've already have couple coming in. We're going to take a look at this and give you about a minute – a minute and a half to type any question you might have before we really open it up for discussion – between the three of us, four, yeah three of us. Four of us, I'm sorry. Recordings and PDF versions of the presentation will be available in about two weeks and it will posted to the AFI Resource Center – info@idaresources.org – and that will be as soon as it goes available. So, feel free to send in the other questions you might have right now and we will chime in about one minute with your … thanks. There's a grantee organization need to come in with seed money for the IDAs given this question about grantee organizations. Jess, do you have any experience with this or any input here?

Jessica Junke: At least in our structure here in Oregon, a grantee does not need to come in with seed money outside of that non-federal match. Although some of our partners across the state do, particularly where there are additional programs and resources that work really well with the IDA program but can sometimes be funding that separate from that non-federal match, but it's still contributing to the program as a partner.

Trevor Hoffberger: Well, thanks. One person asked what federal program money can be used as sources for non-federal fund and I'm not sure I have an answer to that other than what was said earlier is that federal funds can be used to meet those AFI cash requirements if those federal funds have specific statutory authority to be used to meet matching requirements of other several programs. So, it might be specific to the federal fund or federal program money that you already have acquired.

Parker Cohen: Yeah. This is Parker, I'm going to jump in on this one too. I think the person who's asking this question is likely an AFI grantee already and it's probably worth checking with the program specialist in the AFI office or submitting a query through the AFI Resource Center on this particular one because it may depend, like Trevor was saying, on the exact source of that funding but I think it's relatively rare that it can be used as a source of non-federal fund.

Trevor Hoffberger: Okay, great. So, another question here, so when developing a savings plans, do participants have to select which of the three assets will be used like buying a house or secondary education or business capitalization? Do they have to select which of these eligible users they're going to do or can they decide later to spend their savings on a different eligible purchase? So, maybe you start off saving for houses switch to higher education. My initial reaction to that is to say that it's up to the program itself. I can certainly follow up and get back to you unless someone else on the line has any insight here but what an interesting question, I think that it's up to the program to say that if you, you know, determine early on that you're going to save for one thing, you need to stick throughout, it might affect the actual program when you deliver to your participants.

Jessica Junke: Trevor, I'll just jump in and say the way that we've structured it are participants do come in with the specific savings goal and something that has allowed us to market IDAs more clearly as well as manage some of the demands and we found that it is, with the limited program dollars that we have that having a participant who knows what they're saving for, there are time in the program tends to be a little bit shorter so we're able to cover the cost. However, we do allow participants to change their savings goal as they are moving towards it. Sometimes it doesn't make sense to be a homeowner after you've learned about all of it, all the things that it would take to be a homeowner. So, we do allow people to switch.

Parker Cohen: Yeah. And I think that is the definitely the comment in preferred practice, Jessica that it, that's the type should be set at the savings plan agreement time so you can help them work towards that goal and provide them assets specific education to help support that. I don't think there, and I'd have to check though, but I don't there's a legislative requirement that it has to be set at that time but it's certainly a common practice and but that being said you can always amend that savings plan agreement if someone is saving for a house and it turns out there aren't any affordable houses in the area and they'd rather switch to an education IDA down the road.

Trevor Hoffberger: Awesome, thank you guys so much. We've just hit the, the 3 o'clock mark which means we're going to wrap up the webinar. If there are any remaining questions in the queue, we can follow up directly via registration information that you've provided but we thank everybody who joined us today and I'm going thank our, our speakers and presenters and hosts as well. I really appreciate all of your time and I hope you guys have a great day. All right, thank you all, bye.

Parker Cohen: Thanks.