



## **Outreach and Partnering with the Disability Community October 12, 2010**

**Coordinator:** Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time all participants are in a listen only mode. After the presentations, we will conduct a question and answer session. To ask a question at that time you may press star 1. This conference is being recorded. If you have any objection, you may disconnect at this time.

I would now like to turn the conference over to Elizabeth Jennings. Ma'am, you may begin.

**Elizabeth Jennings:** Thank you very much. Good afternoon everyone. My name's Elizabeth Jennings. I work for the National Disability Institute and I'm a subcontractor for Assets for Independence as part of their effort to support asset building strategies for people with disabilities.

As all of you know, Assets for Independence is administered through the Office of Community Services, an enabled community based non-profits and government agencies to implement and demonstrate an asset based approach for giving low income families a hand up out of poverty.

AFI projects help participants save earned income and special purpose matched savings accounts called individual development accounts.

Many of you on the line are grantees and we are very grateful that you decided to join us today. The entire AFI resource team would like to welcome you and if you have questions after the call, please know that you can call the number - 866-778-6037 or, as always, you can log on to [idaresources.org](http://idaresources.org) more for information.

So today we're going to talk about how you as an organization can establish effective partnerships with the disability community. We're going to talk to you a lot about the shared mission that you have in common with the disability community and the fact that the disability community is full actually of low wage workers. Some of the largest - it is the largest group of people living in poverty so it's a great target market for you and your programs.

We're going to provide today an overview of changing attitudes within the disability community and why those changes make the timing right for you, how you can lay a foundation for understanding key providers within the



disability community, ways to bridge the gap between the disability provider community and you, as AFI grantees, and we're going to even give you some partners that can assist you along the way.

So let's get started. There's going to be plenty of time at the end of the Webinar for questions so please don't worry about getting all of your answers today.

We're going to do a quick review of disability poverty and asset building. For those of you who had the chance to join us for our first Webinar, some of this may be a repeat but we want to make sure everybody's on the same page as we start.

We're also going to give a framework for today's discussion. As I mentioned, key players within the disability service system, how to bridge the gap, resources and then plenty of time for questions.

So while you may be asking why asset building for people with disabilities? The primary reason is that they really fit within your target market. Individuals with disabilities often have very limited income and few, if any, assets. In fact, they are really considered to be more likely to experience poverty relative to adults without disabilities.

The poverty rates among this community are two to five times higher than among working aged people without disabilities. And less than 10% of people with disabilities own their own homes compared to 70% of Americans with no disabilities.

For those of you who do some of the more basic financial literacy and getting folks banked, you'd be interested to know that 50% of individuals with disabilities are unbanked.

So we know that you and the services that you provide are a really great match for the disability community and we want to make every effort to help you connect with those key disability service providers, how you can talk to them, how you can start to share your services with this community and continue to fully engage in your mission.

Most importantly on this slide is the last bullet; the knowledge that asset building activities such as AFI IDAs will not cause a loss of critical (SSA) disability benefits. Neither the cash benefit, nor the Medicaid or Medicare. We know that as you explore working with the disability community, you



often find public benefits to be kind of a roadblock in your discussion and we're here to help you navigate those roadblocks and help you to make sure that everyone in the community has quality information that lets them know that it is indeed okay and actually safe for an individual to participate in an AFI IDA.

So let's get a framework going for ourselves. We want to make sure everybody agrees with these four comments before we move forward.

This is the premise of our discussion. Individuals with disabilities can and do work and generate earned income. We know that for the programs that you're providing, individuals have to have earned income and the disability community is a community that works. So individuals with disabilities can and do work and generate earned income.

Individuals with disabilities can participate in local asset building opportunities. As I mentioned, you oftentimes experience some roadblocks because folks have sometimes some bad information about how their public benefits work.

But with proper information, individuals can feel more comfortable in the fact that not only is an IDA a very safe opportunity for them, but Social Security has specific language to guide you, as a provider, through the process and even resources within the community that can assist an individual as they have those conversations with the local office.

Individuals with disabilities can save and build assets and individuals with disabilities are an underserved population of low wage workers. They really do fit into your mission and the target audience of those you see to serve.

However, there have been times when some misinformation about the disability community has led us to view them as a group that is not working and therefore would not have the earned income to participate in these programs.

So as we continue on our discussion today, I'd like you to keep in mind these basic things; that this is a group of people that do work, that they're low wage workers, that they can participate in the opportunities that you have and they can, within some defined factors, some defined pathways, they can save and build assets and we're going to walk you through that.



So some of this may be new to all of you and don't feel bad; it's new to the disability community as well. There's some changing attitudes that are taking place. Historically, public benefit programs have really discouraged savings. You've seen that not only within the disability community but in the other communities that you serve that rely upon a public benefit.

Individuals who needed to maintain the public benefit were encouraged to limit earnings and savings and I'm sorry to say that that still does happen today but there are lots of venues for quality information to help people bypass this assumption and individuals with disabilities were not formally included in asset building opportunities.

And we're really glad that all of you decided to join the call today because some of the onus of this last bullet belongs to the disability community.

We've spent, and I've spent my whole career working within the system, we've spent a lot of time focused on helping people maintain their public benefits and not looking beyond work. And as you know because it's the work that you do, it's very important to look beyond just earned income and consider what a person will do with their money; how they're going to make their money last through the month, how they'll use it to build a path for themselves out of poverty.

And to be honest with you, this is in many ways a new conversation for the disability community. So if you've joined us today, you're really ahead of the game and we're really appreciative that you're taking on this challenge.

So there are some changing attitudes from the very top. Federal offices like Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services, the Social Security Administration, and the Department of Labor and the Department of Disability Services, as well as HHS, are all engaged in activities that are supporting asset building for individuals with disabilities.

Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services have some language that talk about consumer directed finances. The Social Security Administration has lots of language to support specifically individuals using AFI IDAs but also they've had on the books for quite a long time now opportunities for people to earn more and save more while maintaining some, or all, of their benefits.

So as these federal offices are making these changes, they're really making the community more interested and more engaged in the work that you're doing.



At the office that I work at, National Disability Institute, we have an initiative that is working to connect all of you in the asset building community with the disability community through targeted efforts in 100 cities. So we're going to take a look at what these efforts have done.

It's called the real economic impact tour - the purpose has really been to focus initially on free tax assistance and how tax services can become disability inclusive, how we can help all of you to outreach to the disability community and how people with disabilities can be included in as you know what's oftentimes looked as a first step to asset building; securing the earned income tax credit.

So in 100 cities around the country, this targeted effort has been moving forward for the last five years. And while activities vary from city to city, in many areas they've held asset summits; they've created disability work groups within their tax coalition.

They've looked at volunteer tax modules that are really specific to serving taxpayers with disabilities and they've provided benefits education so that as clients came into the tax centers, the staff were equipped with maybe not all of the knowledge about what is the interplay between a person's public benefits and say receiving the earned income tax credit, but they would at least know, as you will by the end of today's call, they'd at least know who in their community to turn to, who they can refer that individual to so that they can know absolutely you can receive your earned income tax credit and here's how long you have to figure out what you want to do with it.

So these activities have been growing over the past five years. I would imagine that some of you on the call have or are currently participating as a real economic impact tour city and if you are, I want to take a moment to say thank you because your work is certainly helping to build this connectedness between the disability community and the asset building community.

There's the map so if it looks like there's a city near you that you want to participate in, we'll get those resources to you.

And here are the results. So over the past five years - now the cities do this work. I'm not taking credit for them. It's the partnership of, you know, last year's 634 partners who did 181,000 tax returns to the tune of \$176.6 million all - and this is their efforts towards people with disabilities.



So it's not reflective of all of the tax returns that these folks did but it is reflective of what they did targeting individuals with disabilities. In one year's time, as folks start to focus on the disability community, we've seen cities report back that they served 125% more individuals than they had served the year before. They engaged the disability community and they went from having four partners that they would consider to be disability partner to 25 partners.

So the efforts that we're going to go over today, as they've been practiced in many of these cities across the country, they're really proving to work and proving to be a thoughtful way that you can engage the disability community by first of all making sure that you understand them and they understand what you can do.

Through this tour, we've seen a lot of new partnerships. So whereas we as a disability organization may have always worked with the local Social Security Office, VR agencies which is vocational rehabilitation agencies, independent living centers. It's very new to have this other side which you all are probably a lot more familiar with; financial institutions, (micro) enterprise lenders, the IRS, whole ownership programs.

So the partnerships now that we're seeing are inclusive of both sides of the page which is really new for many cities, and it's new for the disability community as a whole, and it's really new for you, the asset building community, as a whole as well.

These are some of the key providers that we want you to keep in mind as you start to consider your work within the disability community. These are kind of the go to folks in any community and if we really got into the nitty-gritty of it, you would find that these are the funders within each community.

So many of you know how important your funders become and these are really the funding entities within the disability community.

So we have vocational rehabilitation and their job is to assist individuals who would like to obtain, maintain employment. So in most communities, vocational rehabilitation has a large presence and they in turn fund many of the local disability providers within that community.

The Division of Blind Service provides very similar services. However, they're focused as their name suggests, on individuals who have visual handicaps or are blind.



The Social Security Administration - many of you know them. You pay taxes to them every month. The Social Security Administration provides disability benefits which are cash benefits and healthcare benefits.

And later on we're going to talk about their project called Work Incentives, Planning and Assistance grantees and these are the folks within your own local community that you can reach out to to help people understand their public benefits, the potential of them to do asset building and the intersect of those benefits and the different programs that you have available to them.

Many states across the country almost all have Medicaid infrastructure grants and they are providing resources within their states to help build the - exactly what it says; the infrastructure of the Medicaid system. They have a strong focus on work and assisting individuals with disabilities and returning to work.

In many states - however, Indiana, Wisconsin, Arizona, New York, are all coming to mind. I'm sure there's others. Connecticut - they've used Medicaid infrastructure grant dollars to support connecting the disability community with the asset building community. So for many of you, you may have seen some movement within your state. That could have been a result of Medicaid infrastructure grant dollars.

And those dollars come from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services. So it's just another example of how things at the federal level are changing to make improvements at the local level that provide greater connection for these two communities.

Developmental Disabilities Council's focus on providing services and support to individuals who have developmental disabilities. The Office of Mental Health in each area - there's typically a local office of mental health and they focus on individuals who have behavioral health or mental health issues.

Independent living centers are going to become really probably your best friend. Independent living centers have a mandate to assist individuals to live independently within the community. Many - in many, many cities, we have seen where outreach to independent living centers has led to the independent living center becoming a tax site starting to provide financial literacy, becoming a great referral source for folks from local providers over to IDA providers.



They are very flexible in what they can do and they are typically - many people consider them in their local community the nexus for disability support. So it's a really great opportunity to find them in your local neighborhood and partner with them.

And finally we have your local disability service providers which is a little bit all encompassing.

So (Kip) if we can share with them the Web site. We have on [idaresources.org](http://idaresources.org) an overview of many of these providers so that you can have a little bit more information of them. So if you go to [idaresources.org](http://idaresources.org) and click on People with Disabilities - this is the hub of resources for everything we talk about with you in regards to increasing services to the disability community.

If you've not yet had a chance to explore this Web site, I really encourage you to. It has some wonderful, wonderful resources for you.

Today we're going to show you the third bullet down which is Resources for Navigating Disability Services.

And under this you're going to find more information about what you may want to know about the disability service system. And as you can see, specifically we listed out some of the major disability providers in your local area so that you can get a little bit more information about them, understand who funds them at the federal level, and find ways to connect to them locally.

And, as always, if you need assistance in your local community, you can reach out to us through the IDA Resource Center and we will provide you with that support.

Thanks (Kip).

So the biggest reason why we feel that these are good connectors for you is because you share a mission with them which may be news to you but that's okay. You actually have shared a mission with them for quite some time now.

It's present within the ADA - the Americans with Disabilities Act. And it says the Nation's goals regarding individuals with disabilities are to assure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency. So that's really key that it's in the ADA that individuals with



disabilities should be assured equity of opportunity when it comes to economic self-sufficiency.

And while many advocates of the ADA would say we've done a really good job in some of these other areas; full participation, independent living. Unfortunately, some of the rules that we set up really don't support economic self-sufficiency.

So there's work to be done and some of the work is what you'll be doing. Just connecting to the disability community, letting them know the services you offer and that you are there to help them meet this mission.

There's a lot of things that the local organizations don't know about you. And in every community there's always kind of the best kept secret. And for a long time that was earned income tax credit but folks have been doing a really great job about that. So in your community, it may be your IDA program. For the disability community, they're most likely not to know about the services that you offer.

Part of the reason is we have been so focused on getting people work ready and to work, that thinking about life after work hasn't really been at the forefront. So please don't assume that folks know that you target low wage workers, that you serve individuals and not just families and that folks don't have to be ready to purchase an asset.

It's quite a myth within the local community that if you want to do first time homeownership, you have to be ready to buy; that you have to have your credit done. You have to have already met all of those pieces of the puzzle that you all will support a person through.

So many of them don't know that you offer financial literacy, that you help people create individual budgets, that you know that folks are going to need credit repair. I think we're a little light on the language that you anticipate there may be a need; that you really know that most people are going to need credit repair, that you're going to connect the individual to other opportunities.

So the idea that a person maybe would not have enough money for closing costs, that you would help them to connect with other programs that might provide that.



And the last two are really critical. They don't know that your program is a protected savings vehicle and will not jeopardize the individual's public benefits.

Many of you on the call may be surprised to know and you're going to learn about this more in the third Webinar we do which is going to be particularly on the interplay of the services you provide and public benefits. But just as a teaser, many of you may not know that AFI IDAs are the only path to homeownership for individuals who receive SSI.

They do not have any other protected savings vehicle to save for homeownership. So your services are critically important. They're just not well known of.

And finally, most folks don't know that your services are free. So we're hoping that as you connect with the disability community, you're going to be able to relay all of these things that they likely don't know so that you can increase your services amongst each other.

So how do we suppose you're going to do that? Well, we think that simple is always best. So as a starting point, we want to encourage you to initiate a conversation, insure access and seek assistance and we're going to go through those three things right now.

So initiate the conversation. So you can get the conversation started by hosting an introductory meeting of key stakeholders. It doesn't have to be a big meeting. You know, maybe an hour or two hours; just enough for you to get to know each other and decide if you want to work together.

It's really an opportunity for you to highlight to the disability community the services that you offer and to hear from them what additional needs they may have, how they think that they could help support their individuals in working with you and kind of what some next steps might be to begin your partnership.

Since you haven't met all of your disability partners yet, you're probably curious about who to invite. Well, as an introductory meeting, you don't need to invite everybody. You just want to have a few key players. So if we went back to Slide 12, we had that list of who the key players are and you have access to it at [idaresources.org](http://idaresources.org) as well.



So you want to keep in mind who in your local community might be a key player. Who's trusted by the disability community? If you can find one partner to assist you, you're going to have a much easier time in recruiting folks to the table. So be thoughtful; who in your community is a trusted partner.

If your anchor is say a United Way, then maybe it's a United Way funded organization who - they can help facilitate bringing to the partner - to the table for you as a partner. But don't worry about having everybody from every group there. You just want a few people who can kind of take the reign.

When and where to meet is always a question. There's no time like the present. We know that many of you are engaged in work with your local tax coalitions so you know that as tax time comes, you're going to get really busy. So we're thoughtful of that but we want to encourage you to take the opportunity as you see it to put together a meeting.

The location should be somewhere that is first and foremost accessible. Nothing will take your meeting off course than having a location that is not accessible. I know this probably sounds like something that shouldn't need to be said so please don't take offense. It's just that sometimes it's the simplest things that we overlook.

If you can find a community setting that's neutral ground; someplace that folks tend to come when it's a meeting being convened for collaboration. In some communities, that's the local United Way or the local human services association or even it might be a library or a school or wherever you can that's a neutral ground and will make everybody who's invited feel welcomed and engaged.

So we gave you a sample of an invitation and I think (Kip) could show it to you if you don't mind (Kip).

We encourage you to put together this invitation from a trusted partner. So it could be whoever's leading the work in your local community. It's - you're going to want it to be welcoming to both sides of the table.

So it's a chance for you to let people know when the meeting will take place, who's invited and particularly, a little bit about why you're meeting. You can see in that sample invitation, it lets you know we need to do this because this percentage of our population has a disability and are living in poverty and



that way folks know that this is a group that fits into your target mission but also a group that is potentially being overlooked. Thanks (Kip).

So you don't want to forget at the end of your letter to let people know that they should RSVP and request accommodations. And we did put the language in there for you. It's always important to remember that someone needs to be assigned to fulfill those requests for accommodations. And, again, this is something that can sometimes get overlooked when you have many partners coming to the table and many folks with their hands in the till - in the, you know, their hands stirring the pot so to say.

So you want to make sure somebody's fulfilling the request for accommodations and, as those requests come in, if you need some support or understanding how you can meet those requests, having a disability partner is a really good option but, as always, you can also request assistance from the IDA Technical Assistance Center.

So that brings us to the agenda. What are you going to talk about at this meeting? You've got folks from the disability community at the table. You have folks who are your partners for your AFI IDA or maybe from your tax coalition.

You want to keep in mind that you can't assume that anybody at the table knows what the other does and I, myself, have helped facilitate meetings of this kind in about 30 communities now. And each time I go into the community, somebody says, Elizabeth, we don't need to tell them that. They already know that. And inevitably somebody at the table did not know.

It's really important to make sure that each side, meaning the asset building side and the disability community, has a chance to talk about what they do, the services that they provide and how they see that they could work together.

So you want to try to bring the group together at the end of your meeting so that you can identify some opportunities for collaboration; maybe talk about who's missing, who's not at the table that you think should be and look for some low-hanging fruit.

What are a couple of things that you in partnership could do to have some immediate success? Is there an event coming up that you could cross-market with each other? Is there an opportunity to do cross-trainings at your



organizations? Is there a community event that the asset building community is having or the disability community is having that you could participate in?

Having quick successes is a great way to build the steam of any group starting to work together. So we would encourage you to look for those opportunities.

Now what we would think is a really good outcome for you is that this group would want to meet again. They'd have buy-in. They feel that the conversation was worthwhile and that they can work together as a group.

So as a part of your larger IDA program steering committee or maybe your local EIPC coalition, we would recommend that you form a disability or you could call it a diversity work group.

So this work group could come together and meet more formally; maybe every month or as needed - every quarter. Maybe more leading up to bigger events but that this group would always be looking at how do the services that you're providing, how do the tools that you're putting together or the marketing and outreach materials that you're creating, how do they fit into your agenda to increase services to people with disabilities?

We would definitely suggest that you create an action plan. You have at least some goals in mind that you're going to achieve as a smaller group and that you communicate with the larger coalition. The idea is not for this work group to be only your disability providers, that all of the disability providers meet together and then talk back to you. You want it to be an engaged group of people who work within the asset building community and people who work within the disability community and you want them to have a formal way to communicate with your larger coalition.

We've seen this work in many communities now where the disability work group really takes off. They start off with one or two goals and they find that their success is so immediate and they find that the disability community really is welcoming and supportive. And so they end up with much more - they end up really with a lot more goals than really technical assistance has ever encouraged them to create but it's a great opportunity for folks to see success as they start to work together and to track that success so that everybody knows what's going on.

There's a saying within the disability community. It's call nothing about us without us so we want to make sure that as you are looking at who your



partners are going to be that you don't overlook having individuals with disabilities at the table.

It does happen sometimes. The disability community can end up looking like all of the providers of services but none of the individuals who actually have a disability.

So if you aren't sure who to invite, your disability partners will have ways that they can put you in touch with individuals that are looked at as leaders within their local community, or you may have experienced working with someone who has a disability who's successfully acquired an asset or participated in your program and, as always, personal experience would make for a great set of input for your work group.

Most importantly we want to make sure that as you're building your initial meeting, as you're looking at your work group and as you're looking at how you're going to continue to outreach to the disability community that you're always thinking about access.

Access oftentimes gets thought of as physical access; can you get in the building, can you use what's available but it's also program access. You want to make sure that your program is accessible, that you're providing effective communication meaning that you're looking at the ways that you're communicating with an individual to meet their communication needs.

You want to look at whether or not you need to modify any policies or procedures and we really want to encourage you to ask for help. You do not have to know everything or have perfect language as you engage in this but you do need to know where you may need a little bit of assistance and ask for that help.

So let's break this down a little bit more. Of course you are all aware of building accessibility; parking and ramps, making sure the entrance is accessible, that the restrooms are usable, that you're looking at - when you're looking at classroom space, you want to make sure that an individual with a disability would be able to navigate through the classroom.

Those are all building accessible issues and typically somebody in your organization is available to you to help with this. But what we're really more thoughtful about is program accessibility and that's where we talk about some of the other issues.



So we have provided for you some examples of what we mean by program accessibility; in particular, effective communication. There's many different types of disabilities and it's very difficult to know just from looking at someone or meeting someone what their needs might be so the best way is to offer accommodations and by that we mean large print, Braille, adaptive equipment, interpreters, and to ask if an individual needs an accommodation.

You don't have to guess if a person needs something. It's really about whether or not you ask and then you provide. So it's important as you're looking at these things, do you have that language in your brochures. Do you have that language in your meeting rooms? And does your staff know that? Is your staff thoughtful about providing the additional supports or services that an individual might need and who they can turn to if they don't know how to provide or don't know what to provide for an individual?

You may need to make some modifications to your policies and procedures. Sometimes policies and procedures inadvertently create barriers to individuals participating. So one of the examples we want to give you is you offer financial literacy. It's required as part of your AFI IDA program.

And your class is offered in the evenings, but perhaps an individual with a disability is unable to attend because their special transportation services don't run at that time or they - because of the window of time that they have to provide for those transportation providers, they can't guarantee that they'll be able to get out at night and get back home at a reasonable time.

So it's really important to consider that while absolutely financial literacy should be required, is the way that the program is set up has that inadvertently created a barrier.

So it's important to be flexible, and having a work group that can help you look at these things could be really helpful for you so that you don't have to take on the task of understanding every piece of the disability puzzle but you have a group who is there to support you and your work and can help you to navigate some of these issues.

It's really important as you look at services to individuals with disabilities that you consider what we call an informed choice. So as you can imagine, informed choice is making decision and choices based upon really quality information.



So while it's going to be important for individuals and their supports, it's also going to be important for you. So we want to make sure everybody has a chance to get all of their quality information as they're moving down through this initiative.

But most individuals that you meet with and their supports are not going to know what an IDA is or how it works or what the benefits are. In particular, they're going to have questions about how it affects their disability benefits, their healthcare and their access to disability services.

And we know that you as an organization who administers AFI IDAs probably don't know the answers to number three - how it will affect a person's disability benefits, healthcare and access to disability services.

So on our next Webinar we're going to provide that information for you. My colleague, (Susan O'Mara), with Virginia Commonwealth University, is going to break that down for you so I really encourage you to attend our next Webinar.

But if you go back to [idaresources.org](http://idaresources.org), we do have some of this other information on there and it's provided in a way that you can print it out and offer it to individuals with disabilities so that they can see what an IDA is, how it works and why it's important for them to utilize it.

And maybe (Kip) we can just take a second to pull that up on the IDA Web site. So [idaresources.org](http://idaresources.org) - again under the disability initiative, the second one up from the bottom - yeah.

The second arrow up from the bottom is information for people with disabilities and disability service providers. So all of you who are on the call we already created this information for you. You don't have to go back to your local community and take on the task of figuring out how am I going to explain all of this to individuals with disabilities. We've already done that.

So you can pull these down. You can view them. You can provide them say with your own materials and we're available as always to help you if you want other ideas about how to use these materials. Thank you (Kip). Great.

Really what we want to tell you is to make sure that you ask for help and there's three specific partners that we want to make sure you know to go to. Of course the disability - the centers for independent living or the independent living centers. They conduct activities to increase the capacity



of communities within the service area of their center to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

So their mandate comes from the Rehab Act and what they mean by conduct activities is they may be able to help you with doing disability sensitivity training. They may be able to keep your brochures at their centers so that they can help you to connect with individuals with disabilities. They may be able to host a meeting for you.

There's a lot of opportunities in working with the independent living centers and they're a really good first connector for you in your local community.

The next group that we want to make sure that you know about is through the Social Security Administration. The Work Incentive Planning and Assistance projects. These are folks who are grantees of the Social Security Administration, and they understand how to serve an individual with disabilities who receives public benefits in helping them kind of navigate the benefit system so that they can understand what impact work has on their benefit, what impact savings will have on their benefit, how they can utilize some of Social Security's work incentives to help them participate in an IDA program.

And specifically they can be the person to help the individual understand the impact of participating in an IDA on their public benefits and how they're going to report that to the local Social Security office.

As with any big system, sometimes there's a disconnect between what the federal government puts in writing and what the local office knows to process. So the WIPAs can be really helpful in making sure that there's no miscommunication when an individual wants to participate in your IDA program and needs to report that participation to the Social Security office.

You can connect with your local WIPA project. It's right there - [ssa.gov/work/wipa](https://ssa.gov/work/wipa) and WIPAs cover every part of the United States and its territories so you have a WIPA in your local area. You just need to know who they are.

And if you do come into conflict in connecting with your WIPA, of course you can reach out to us for assistance and we'll get you connected.

The next group that can be infinitely helpful to you is the ADA National Network. The ADA is the Americans with Disabilities Act and there are ten



regional ADA centers across the U.S. They provide free technical assistance so if you have a question about the ADA or providing an accommodation and maybe you'd be more comfortable talking to an outside entity, it's always confidential. You can call them at any time and they have lots of free training.

So if you want to get more information or you want to have your staff better understand the ADA, this is a great resource for you.

Finally, as always, the AFI resource team is available to you. You can contact us by phone, by Email or look to on site TA. And the phone number is there and if you haven't had a chance once again to explore [idaresources.org](http://idaresources.org), we encourage you to do that so that you can learn more about this topic.

As we move forward in the next couple of weeks, we're going to have posted the complimentary materials you got today, the briefing on how to get the conversation started when you want to serve people with disabilities and the sample invitation letter.

Also a recording of this Webinar will be available so if you have staff members who didn't get to participate, you can direct them to [idaresources.org](http://idaresources.org) under the disability community and they can listen to it as if they were here for the real thing.

So let's go ahead and open the call for questions.

Coordinator: If you would like to ask a question, please press star 1. You will be prompted to record your name. To withdraw your request, you may press star 2. Once again to ask a question press star 1 on your touch-tone phone.

We have a question from (Bernadette Ness).

(Bernadette Ness): My question is for a program a grantee that is not currently providing services to the disability community, how do we get into it. I know you touched bases or you talked about generally how to start the program but one of the concerns that we have because it's a new aspect for us, how do we get started on getting funding to provide that aspect of programming for program like in funding right now.

Elizabeth Jennings: So the question is if I understand how do you look at additional resources to serve the disability community?



(Bernadette Ness): Yes, ma'am.

Elizabeth Jennings: That's a really great question. So I think you want to be thoughtful about which part of your program really requires those extra resources. If it's an assumption about the cost of accommodations, it might be best to meet with disability partners first to see what they're going to be able to provide.

However, there are - in every community, there are groups and foundations that specifically fund outreach to the disability community and if you have a local United Way, they're a good start. Otherwise I would encourage you - if after - even after this Webinar you're looking at your local community and saying I see no one. I see no one Elizabeth. Then I'd really encourage you to call us at the AFI resource center and we'll get you connected.

(Bernadette Ness): Okay.

Coordinator: At this time there are no other questions.

Elizabeth Jennings: Okay. So just a quick recap. Again thank you all for attending today. We appreciate you considering expanding your services to the disability community. As you engage in this endeavor, please remember that you're not alone, that we know you're going to have questions and concerns and we welcome you to call us at the AFI Technical Center and to visit our resources on [idaresources.org](http://idaresources.org).

We pretty much feel like there's a lot there to help you so if you haven't had a chance to explore that, I encourage you to and I hope we hear from you as you look at ways that you can provide your wonderful array of services to meet the needs of your local community with disabilities. Thank you so much.

Coordinator: Thank you. This does conclude today's conference call. You may disconnect your phones at this time.

END