



## **Telling Your Story: The Power of Effective Messaging**

February 8, 2012

**Johanna:** Hello everyone, and welcome to the webinar **Telling Your Story: The Power of Effective Messaging**. This webinar is the fourth in a series of “Tools for Success” webinars designed for Assets for Independence grantees. My name is Johanna Barrero, and I’d like to welcome you to our conversation today.

Before we start today’s presentation, I’d like to begin with a few housekeeping items.

If you’re having trouble dialing in you can listen through your computer using speakers or connecting a headset to your computer.

If you’re having technical difficulties such as trouble connecting to the visual portion of the webinar, send us an e-mail and we’ll send you the Power Point file as an attachment so that you can follow along. The e-mail address is [webinars@cfed.org](mailto:webinars@cfed.org).

Today’s webinar is being recorded, so you will be able to review it on demand. You will receive a follow up email in about a week with details on how to access the recording. We will also send a copy of the PowerPoint presentation that is being used today.

We have a number of participants registered today, so your phone lines have been muted to ensure sound quality.

We encourage you to send questions at any time during this presentation by using the Questions box in your GoToWebinar Control Panel. We will try to answer as many of your questions as we can during the presentation.

The Assets for Independence Program, or AFI for short, is the largest source of funding for IDA programs nationally. We realize that some of you on this call may not be AFI grantees, so we want to provide you with information about the program.

To learn more about AFI, including how to apply, visit [www.idaresources.org](http://www.idaresources.org)

There is an upcoming Orientation Session that may be of interest to you:

AFI Program Overview and Grant Application Process (webinar):

Tuesday, February 28, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. EST

Register at [www.idaresources.org](http://www.idaresources.org)

Now that we’ve gotten those housekeeping items out of the way, I’d like to briefly introduce our guest speakers for today’s webinar and ask them to describe their organizations:

Our first guest speaker is Martha Wunderli, She is the statewide director of the Utah Development Account Network in Salt Lake City.

**Martha:** Hi, this is Martha. I have been running the statewide network IDA program since our first grant which was in October 2004. We've been around 8 years working state wide with a lot of different entities. I hope I can add to the topic today.

**Johanna:** Our second guest speaker is Christina Cain. She is the director of the asset building center at New Visions New Ventures in Richmond, Virginia. Unfortunately, she's not feeling well today and is unable to join us. However she has graciously allowed us to go over the content she has put together for the webinar. We will do our best to give justice to her presentation.

You moderator today will be Leigh Tivol.

**Leigh:** Hi I'm Leigh Tivol. I've worked in the IDA space since 1998. I'm a former IDA practitioner. I'm here today in my capacity as a member of the AFI Resource Center. The AFI Resource Center provides training and technical assistance to AFI grantees, their project partners, and other organizations that are providing asset building services across the country. We've been putting together this series of tools for success webinars.

**Johanna:** And I'm Johanna Barrero. I'm with the AFI Resource Center as well and I'll be co-moderating today's webinar with my colleague Leigh.

Today we will talk about the importance of messaging and examples of audiences that grantees should and often do target. We will also talk about the kinds of messages that resonate with specific constituencies. Finally, we will hear real-world advice from AFI grantees that have used messaging to improve the visibility and funding of their programs.

Now I'd like to turn it over to Leigh to tell us why messaging is important and what do we mean by messaging.

**Leigh:** I want to offer a couple of minutes of context before we dive in. The reason we were so excited to bring this webinar to you is because we recognize that you have a lot of things to do every day such as recruiting, bringing funds into your program and drawing down the federal AFI match. You're creating partnerships, working with decision makers and the public to get the word out about your IDA program. Of all of the things you have to do you may not be thinking about messaging. You may be so busy with day to day work that messaging may not be an intentional part of your daily plan. But the fact is that well practiced messaging helps you advance all the aspects of your IDA program and that's why we wanted to bring this content to you today.

So what do we mean by "messaging?" I think it can mean a lot of things. One way to think about is by making sure we articulate answers to key questions. This depends on the audience. The questions are things like "why should someone join my program?; Why should someone give money to my IDA program or in other ways support or partner with my program?; How can I convey that in a compelling way?" "What has my program accomplished, what is the community and individual impact?" The first piece of messaging is articulating the answers to those critical

questions and presenting them in a way that fits well with the audience that you're working with. Messaging is not a one size fits all undertaking as we've described, there are a lot of different audiences that your program can and should tailor their messages to. We have a guest speaker who is going to offer her perspective on effective messaging to a couple of different audiences. Again, we are sorry that Christina Cain will not be here with us today and we'll speak as best we can to her slides. We'll first start with Martha Wunderli, who's had great success in messaging to corporate and business sponsors and community decision makers.

Before we turn it over to Martha we have a quick "instapoll" question we'd like to ask you, the audience to respond to. We'll give you 1 minute to respond and then we'll discuss the answers:

The question is:

What is the most common pushback you get from funders when you're talking to them about funding your IDA program?

- a. IDA programs serve fewer clients than other programs
- b. Looking for higher return on their investment
- c. Competition with other programs serving children
- d. Competition with programs serving vulnerable populations

We're going to give you just a minute here to choose and submit your answer, and then I'll ask Johanna to go ahead and show us the results.

This is interesting. We see a split decision here. It looks like the primary challenge programs are facing in fundraising, and we know there are probably more than one, is that you're competing with other programs also serving vulnerable populations. And secondly, you feel your programs are smaller in scope and scale than other comparable programs. Hopefully we can touch on some of these points.

Let me turn it over to you Martha as you talk about approaching corporate and business sponsors and community decision makers.

**Martha:** Hi, this poll is very interesting to me. Whenever I have a challenge and I have to talk to a potential funder it's always good to know what the objections would be. It would be interesting to ask our funders what's happening on their end and if they would agree with our feedback.

One of the things that's really important is that when you go out you should really know what your product is. If you think of IDA as a product it will really help. A lot of people go in really fuzzy but talk about specifically what it is and what it will give back to the community. Then you have to know yourself and your style. Some of us are chattier or like to throw numbers around but be comfortable with you. Don't deliver someone else's style. The key thing is really to combine your passion for what you do and how it will really impact the stakeholders' community. It's a combination of product, you and putting those together and going out and loving what you do. If you love what you do, it makes a big impact on the person you're presenting to.

One of the things that's important is that a lot of us sit down and we all go through grants, books, we look at Community Reinvestment Act tax credits, which are what bankers would give you, and we just start writing letters. But we don't have a connection with the person. It's important to know who your funder is. One of the things you can do is just sit down and look at their website. Figure out what they're all about. But most importantly, that I would suggest, is find a connector; someone that you know, you've already sold on the product, who will help you make those connections. It's not unusual for me to say to a funder "you know this person, will you set up the appointment?" For example, I went into a bank when we first started the program and I walked in with another banker who played golf with that banker. After we made the introduction the new person said "This is really smart Martha. Every time I see one of you nonprofits I put my hand over my wallet because I know you're going after me but this is smart because I know Steve." I highly recommend that.

Look and see where their corporate giving interests are, you can see that on their websites. If they only give to kids, it's probably not a place to start. You also want to know historically how much money they've given; what their commitment is to their community so you will get a good return on your investment when you go in. Also, I think it is important to look at other non-profits and other IDA programs, look at my website and see who funds us and see if they're in your community. Understand their perspective. One of things that's really important when you talk to a corporate person is to talk in their language. Talk about return on investments, creating new customers for them. Banks are really interested in public relations right now. They may not be interested in those bank accounts we used to talk about, when I first started the program in 2004, and there was a negative savings rate, but the banks take a lot of heat right now, with the whole Occupy movement. The other thing is dress like they dress. If you're meeting a CEO of a company, go in your business attire rather than what you would go out with your clients. Another thing with corporate people is to go in not only dressing and talking their language but bring in business documents. When I didn't have any track record I went in with a business plan. This is my plan and this is what I think it will return to the community and I brought in a budget. They think in terms of that. If we are thinking of how we are going to spend their money that speaks to them. Also have a strategic plan in terms of where you think you're going to go. If you're at the beginning it might be speculation, you'll have to do a lot of research on poverty in your area but really have a plan for bringing people out of poverty and bringing a good return to your corporate business sponsor.

It's important to see where you would connect with them. So financial institutions get CRA tax credits for working with low and moderate income people and all our IDA people are CRA eligible so you may want to go research CRA tax credit and see what their tests are and what they have to be answering to. And then the other thing is, a lot of these businesses cater to our customers so you may want to start there. You may not want to go into Nordstrom's, but you may want to go into thrift shops, lower income department stores. And it's important to use success stories. I like to go in with statistics but people ultimately will fund human beings. Go to the CRA officer in banks; I like to call them the social workers in the bank. They're interested in the story of the single mom who was homeless, who now has a job. The thing that I notice is that in most presentations I've done, especially if I've done a group with a banker, usually when they leave the room they say "my daughter could really use this program." You would be surprised who has relatives or employees who are lower paid who they want to see get training

and move ahead. That's really important; to couple with all of those statistics that connection to their humanity

I think the most common mistake people make when they go in to look for money is that they go in, they tell the story and they walk out without ever asking. If you listen to politics right now, you'll hear that all these candidates will ask for your vote. So that's what we have to do when we go in to corporate business sponsors. We have to ask them for support. That can be a little scary if you haven't done your research; you don't want to ask a smaller funder for a million dollars and a larger funder for 500 dollars. So do research to see what's realistic. You go in and say "what do you think you should give me?" It shows that you don't understand your product. If you go in and say your funding will help support someone go back to college, start a small business that will add tax dollars in your community or someone who will buy a home and then tie those specific numbers based on your match. It's important to talk about how their funding will be matched 1 to 1 by the federal government thereby doubling their investment. Don't be afraid to really research what you need. If you have a budget and a strategic plan you can ask them to do that.

Another thing that we often forget is that we forget to thank people and tell them how they will be recognized in the community. My experience is: the bigger the donation, the more they need to be thanked. When you go in, tell them how they will be recognized. How you'll put them on your website, in your brochure, how you'll issue a press release. Give them feedback. Don't just go in and say thank you for your money. Say you'll get back to them and tell them how their money has been spent. I send out something about monthly but in most grants they'll have some sort of a time frame but it's important to stay in touch because people will fund who they know. The other thing is corporate people are business people so don't get so caught up with the passion and you go over their time frame. When you leave the meeting, be sure to leave a summary of what you just talked about, like a one pager. The other thing is, make sure that people want to be recognized. There are some people who don't, so you want to establish that. In my experience most of them do but there are some private donors that don't want to be recognized. And then when you leave the meeting be sure to get a business card or ask them how you can stay in touch with them. If they say "no," I never take "no" for an answer, I just consider it as a "not now" and I might leave it with "what could I give you in the future that would make this more interesting to you." Once you get their contact information I would continue to send them information about your program even if they said "no."

Thank them for their time; always follow up with thank you letters that summarize your meeting. I like emails but I think a letter is really helpful. So I would do both to make sure you stay in touch with them.

**Leigh:** Before you move into the community decision makers' piece, if it's ok, can I ask a couple questions?

First of all, thank you. This is a terrific overview and I think folks who are listening can see that there is a lot of overlap between the other parts of the work that we are doing, in this case fundraising and messaging. Messaging is critical. You've given us a little taste of both, some general fundraising tips but the whole point is that once you're in the door you have this opportunity to deliver the message in a way that it resonates and then there's a bunch of follow up that needs to happen too. I wonder if you could share any examples of particularly tough

nuts to crack that you've met with on the fundraising side and what specific message you used that was persuasive to them?

**Martha:** Lots of times we make the mistake that if your presenting in a group I watch to see the response I'm getting. When it's over I will go up to the person who I can tell was not buying the message and ask them how I could present the product in a way that would make it more meaningful to them. It's important to hear what their objections are and then you can answer those objections. That's the one thing that's important, is to really see and some of the things you talked about were interesting. Back a couple years ago people really were looking at supporting the bottom level and just doing food and shelter because people were hurting so much but now it's important to talk about, especially with a corporate sponsor, how this will build local communities. I start talking about people moving out of housing authority and into homeownership and becoming tax payers and how that turns the economy. Those kinds of information as opposed to something that says "this is an IDA, a special matched savings account and financial education..." Really talk about the impact on the community. It's really smart to watch the audience and see what's clicking with them and what's not and then follow up. The tools should be very short because people are busy and I think they need to talk about community impact more than the structure of an IDA program.

**Leigh:** Thank you, that's a great point Martha. I think, that a lot of us, as IDA practitioners work so hard in the day to day just to manage the program, that often we talk more about the "how" of what we do than the "so what" and I think messaging here is really about the "so what." We are working really hard to bring in account holders, well, why is that, so what, what does that do? What is the ultimate outcome of the program? Then collapse that into a really short elevator speech because you may not have that much time with the folks that you're trying to deliver that message to. I wanted to circle back, before we move back on to the next part of your presentation, I wanted to move back to the instapoll we did in the beginning about the most common pushback your get back from funders. The two biggest responses were competition with other programs serving vulnerable populations and that IDA programs are smaller in scale than other social programs serving many thousands of people. How would you respond to that?

**Martha:** I've dealt with those issues. In the numbers game, my response is this is a short term intervention for long term gain. Yes we have smaller numbers in the short term but we move people out of our case loads and into more on a pathway into the financial mainstream. We have small numbers in the short term but we have intense services in the short term that will pay off in the long term. I've done some studies with the University of Utah, with some econometrics in terms of payback into the community. For example, EITC has much larger numbers but they don't have the intensity of treatment we have. They may come in every year.

So I've gone into people where they've said to me "ok I'll fund you but who should I cut back on" you hear that a lot in almost every sector. Well we are a solution we really, rather than just giving people food for tonight, which is important, we are going to give them the tools so they won't have to go back to these safety net programs as much and this will allow them to reduce the caseload, so we should be working together to get people moving along. That was hard as I said a couple of years ago when the unemployment rate was horrible and people needed to eat and have shelter tonight, but I said we need to move people along the continuum, so people who hit rough patches will have room and the system won't be over taxed.

**Leigh:** That's great, thank you and some of those I think would be equally powerful with the community decision makers who make up the next part of your presentation.

**Martha:** Again I think you will see a common theme. Whenever you're going out talking about your program, you need to know your audience and their perspective. We will find people who don't agree with us. If I fund you then I can't fund someone else. So I've been in situations where people really pushed my buttons and I had to really stifle myself in terms of getting angry. What I always look for is that common connector where you can start to agree. You may have a community decision maker who has had a child, an adult child who experienced homelessness and was hit with down and out or had huge student loan debt, so when you get to that point you can go in and you can sense where they are, and then you can start to move into those measurable outcomes. The IDA program, as many of you know, was started, we don't use this word so much anymore, but we can ultimately talk about human potential; so you want to find out what your decision makers are feeling and how you can connect with them. That's that person I see in the audience shaking their head "no." I immediately go to that person. One of my bankers was like that, he was like "no, no, no" and he's one of my biggest funders right now because I took the time to listen to his objections. That's important; sometimes we think, oh they don't know any better or they're dumb. And then always know the audience and the measurable outcomes. This is what the program consists of and this is what will happen. Know them and what you'll deliver.

There are two arguments that I use: Some people like the social justice argument so you go in about how IDAs level the playing field and you talk about people like Abraham Lincoln or someone, people who were poor and then became leaders. We've heard that IDAs are hope in concrete form. They end poverty, its equal access and that's where I go in with stories. I have a wonderful story of a single mom who was homeless and dumpster diving at work, because a lot of homeless people are employed, and we know that. She came into the IDA program and had decided that she didn't want to be poor anymore. She completed community college, got her bachelor's degree and now has a masters in social work and it changed her whole perspective in terms of how she could move along from someone who was talking "poverty" to talking about how she has little disposable income and would like to learn about investments because she is the first person in her family to graduate from high school. You should really show the movement of someone, for example in this case from homelessness to a master's degree and someone who is looking at investment products.

And then the other side of the spectrum; I may be being a little simplistic but the other one is kind of the personal responsibility person. Someone who thinks low income people are lazy. Talk about how IDAs build local economies and wealth. How it enables someone like Rachel (that I was talking about before), how she went from dumpster diving to investment. How she owns a home, how she went from housing authority to owning her own home through Habitat for Humanity. And then also it's important to talk about, I listen to what's happening in my part of the world; education is a big priority in Utah right now. They want to create a skilled work force. There's a lot of foreclosed homes, empty homes and high crime rates so we want to put people into those homes so they become tax payers. Also small businesses in rural areas churn the economy and bring money through the economy. And then with this group I would use a lot of data, like number of asset purchased, dollars saved. We can show that low income people can save. Tax dollars increased, housing vouchers, released, earning capacity increase, businesses

started. It's really the same message but the wording is different as opposed to someone who really believes in social justice issues as opposed to people who think of them as social entitlements. That's how I break those two apart.

**Leigh:** Thank you Martha, you've done an incredible job of showing us that messaging is both what you say and how you say it and those two things depend on who you're saying it to. Certainly some people respond to different arguments. Some will respond to those powerful participant success stories that we should all be gathering, some will respond to facts and figures. If you haven't begun to collect those success stories, we strongly suggest that you begin to do that. There are some great examples on [idaresources.org](http://idaresources.org), and as far as the hard data that Martha was talking about this is why it's important to track your programmatic outcomes and your data both for program management but also you can use that to make a case for the difference you're making in the community

So I'll ask Martha to stay at the ready as we move to the next section. Again this was a section that was going to be presented by Christina Cain with New Visions, New Ventures in Richmond, VA. Unfortunately, just before the call we learned that she had lost her voice so she's generously allowed us to present her slides so we are going to do the best that we can to cover what she would have covered but I'll ask Martha to jump in from time to time as we cover these. Martha, from the practitioner perspective, feel free to chime in with any anecdotes you'd like to share. Before we do that I want to launch our second instapoll of the webinar. Here we are changing the audience. We are looking at targeting account holders.

The question is:

What is the most common hesitation you encounter when recruiting account holders?

- a. Program sounds too good to be true
- b. Clients feel they don't have enough money to save
- c. Clients are concerned about losing public benefits
- d. IDA program goals are too long-term

We'll give you a few seconds to cast your vote here and then I'll have Johanna post the responses when they are ready.

Ok so perhaps not surprisingly in this very down economy and given the income guidelines in IDA programs the biggest barrier is persuading clients that it is possible to find money in that daily budget to save even when times are tight. The second most popular is that the goals are too long term. We can address these in the way we communicate with account holders.

Let's go to Christina's slides. Well try to give them justice. Again New Visions New Ventures is based in Richmond Virginia, they've been providing IDAs since 2002 they've had a couple AFI grants and have been thoughtful about their approach.

The first is that we need to make the language work for us, not against us when working with account holders. We have a tendency to talk at people rather than to them. We have to

understand and listen to their needs and act accordingly. Some of the specific strategies that New Visions, New Ventures uses is a financial education curriculum that is highly interactive rather than a lecture. This allows them to use the classes as a focus group to gather intel on what kind of messages work and why people join the program or not and how they may need to change their marketing accordingly. So they are using this information to continually evolve and adapt their IDA marketing.

Christina also found that this emphasis on that the program is for low income families can work for you or against you. Rather than focusing on “you qualify because you are low income” she has had more success in focusing on what IDAs do. They bring hope and the matched savings piece is the carrot; it’s what gets people interested. The behavioral change is not the part that she markets; that’s driven by the financial education and the programmatic tasks. One of the ways they’re getting people in the door is that they have a shorter term IDA program and they are marketing it as such as a 1 to 2 year program to fast track people through the initiative. That’s one way to address the concern that IDAs are a longer term savings goal.

**Johanna:** I’d like to add that New Visions New Ventures also focuses a lot of their efforts on helping women start businesses. So they use IDAs as a vehicle to do that and that’s how they message their IDAs for small businesses. This is where you’ll get your capital to start your business or grow your business rather than focusing on “this as a service for low income persons” which is true since that represents most of their clients, but they focus on the benefits that the IDA offers their clients.

**Leigh:** Thanks. So then the second key strategy that New Visions, New Ventures uses is keeping it consistent. Once they’ve found a set of messages that they think are right for them given the context, they hold onto the messages. So they’re not changing their message for each audience; they’re keeping the core messaging the same and just changing the lens through which they’re delivering those messages. To bring accountholders in, one of the most powerful things is to use testimonials from program graduates who can tell the story of the program and instill confidence for people on the fence about enrolling. It is incredibly helpful to hear from someone else who has been through the same thing that we are facing. For example someone saying “I didn’t think I could save either but the financial education class let me find where my spending leaks were” those kind of stories coming from friends, neighbors, peers can be powerful. Finally Christina’s team has developed a list of talking points for their staff so the same messages are being delivered every time.

**Johanna:** When you think about using testimonials and pictures and stories from your participants just make sure you get that consent that is really important. Get consent from the participants so you can use their stories.

**Leigh:** The third strategy that New Visions, New Ventures is keeping the message simple especially for accountholders. Use plain English, no jargon, minimize the acronyms; we sometimes end up in this alphabet soup. A good example is the way they overhauled their mission statement because it was difficult to understand. They got some pro bono help from a PR firm that helped them redraft their mission and deliver it more effectively. Take a look at their old mission statement. Its long and wordy, lots of big long words and most of us probably stop reading half way through.

The new mission statement is very simple, short plain English, easily understandable, you read this and you know what they're doing. Now the mission statement is not the way you would think of the primary outreach to prospective account holders. What New Visions, New Ventures did in creating this new mission statement led them to overhaul their entire website and use the same language and they've added a social media component. It includes blog content that they are updating frequently, so there's always something new. What's incredibly interesting is the outcome. Their financial education enrollment and their IDA applications increased by 200%. We should ask ourselves: Are our materials clear? Are they easier to understand? Are they visually uncluttered? It might be worth it to look at your own materials with a fresh eye as a prospective saver might or share them with someone outside your organization for feedback.

New Vision New Ventures is also putting a lot of focus on telling the stories of their savers, again, we hear this over and over. It's one of the most compelling strategies to advance your program, the transformative impact that IDAs have on people's lives. This is helpful for internal audience and external audiences such as funders. Finally is celebrating success. And how do you define success? Well, the beauty is we get to define it ourselves. The way New Visions New Ventures defines it is in terms of number of savers, the number of business plans completed and the number of graduates. They're really trying to make a point of shouting it out when they have a client who reaches a successful point. They are trying to tell those stories early and often. Finally, they've worked hard to develop partnerships and those too represent important messaging opportunities so it's not just your IDA program but also your program in partnerships with other groups can amplify your message and lend additional credibility to funders and others.

So I think with that we've walked quickly through Christina's slides. Were sorry she couldn't be here to deliver it herself. So now we want to ask your questions. Johanna, will you share a few questions you've collected?

**Johanna:** Yes. How can I leverage the local media to get more visibility for my organization?

**Martha:** This is a tricky one. One of the things we try to do is to get some impact stories, world events can get in the way. We hit the front page of the money section on a Sunday because it was a slow news day. It was an incredible resource if you can manage it. I couldn't work for about two and a half days, because people called and said if she can do it, I can do it. You have to watch what they're talking about; find out who are the writers that write on your topic. Be a resource for them, give them statistics when they need them and hopefully they'll remember you when you need something. You have to find out whose writing the news articles in your particular newspaper or TV station and feed them stats. Like the CFED scorecard, that's really great. They had a press release and people called and then sometimes they want connections to the people experiencing that. I have released information for all my savers and graduates who are willing to go public. If you can get someone who can be interviewed to put a face on the story that's great. You have to do a lot more work than you would get in return, but this is what you do, so feed them stats, feed them the poverty rates, the CFED stats and then put a face on it and hopefully you'll get lucky. It's a lot of work.

**Leigh:** I have a question: I'm curious, Martha could you speak to your experience, when you're recruiting and supporting account holders what modes of messaging are most helpful? Having a

flier? How you deliver an outreach session? Is it emails? Having a website? What's been most helpful for you in Utah?

**Martha:** I think the flier is the least effective and it costs money. I watch my referral sources very carefully because that's really important. So whenever someone enters or calls us we ask them how they heard of us then we go back to that source. Because sometimes it doesn't work where you think it would work. Word of mouth is the most important. I'm going to be doing some outreach in a rural area and I'm asking graduates to come and speak at the orientation class. They tell their story about what's important for them because in a lot of cases what's important to them may not be as important to us. A lot of people would say the financial education and how they manage their lives. Those are the most important messaging tools

Lastly we work in partnership with people who have established relationships with people who would be eligible for the program, such as: Housing Authorities; family self-sufficiency programs; tribal groups; and refugee services providers. You do have to get over a trust relationship with some people. So it will help a lot more than a brochure if you have someone who heard about the program from a partner or someone they know.

**Leigh:** You talked about the trust issue and one of the questions we frequently get is; are there any messages that don't work swell? In my own experience in the very early days of IDAs when we were all learning, a lot of us were putting out fliers that said "free money." I think the field has learned that that is a message that can backfire because it may seem too good to be true. Are there other messages you would advise others to steer away from?

**Martha:** Free money makes me crawl because that speaks to someone doing something unto you rather than you engaging with a financial product that will change your life. People smell that a mile away. That's an interesting question. I never know again, I have to go back to the messaging you really need to know your audience. If I go down to a reservation in very remote Utah, people think I talk too fast and if they know I'm not from Utah and they're very suspicious that's where I have to engage with someone for example a tribal council member and have them go to the decision makers have them message it out for you so it's not coming from you and you can really see where the possible points are, because you might not know. I might not have known if I hadn't talked to the director of Indian affairs that when you turn 18 years old in the reservation you get 50,000 dollars. So how can you prepare an 18 year old to get \$50,000 dollars? Those are inside stuff that you need to know. If you want to reach a broad audience, especially state wide you can't deliver the same message to everyone. I had to go back to the theme of this webinar. Know your audience and you may need to know what's going on by talking to people who are insiders.

**Leigh:** that's great. Thanks Martha. We're getting toward the top of our hour we have a couple more pieces of information we want to share. Johanna any more questions?

**Johanna:** We find that many people don't want to open accounts because we charge a fee for initial sessions and follow ups. Should we be charging for these services?

**Leigh:** So they're charging and that's creating the barrier. That's a difficult hurdle to overcome, Martha any insights?

**Martha:** This is a philosophical thing, we don't charge so I can't speak specifically on it. However, there are a lot of people out there who think that if it's free it has no value. I could probably work around this in terms of the return they get on investments. I can't speak to that directly.

**Leigh:** I think I would suggest to this program that you give folks a sense of what it is they're paying for and what they're getting out of it. Focus on whether it's a learning opportunity with the Financial Education and focus on what they're getting for their money and what the larger opportunities are down the road.

So at this point, I thank you all for your great questions. Martha, thank you so much for your advice and insights. I will turn it back to Johanna for some last housekeeping notes.

**Johanna:** Thank you Leigh. You will see on your screen our contact information, should you want to contact any of the guest speakers or me. You'll see Christina's information in case you have any questions for her even though she couldn't join us, she will be happy to answer them.

If your question didn't get answered and you'd like to follow up, please contact us by email at [johanna.barrero@idaresources.org](mailto:johanna.barrero@idaresources.org)

Also, keep your eyes open for upcoming webinars in this "Tools for Success" series. The next one will be: **Putting Savers on the Fast Track: Strategies for Express IDAs** and will be held on February 15. You can register by following the link on your screen. We'll send this link to you, along with the rest of the PowerPoint slides, in a week.

And, finally, we have an "instapoll" evaluation question we'd like to ask you to respond to. It will only take a few seconds and it will help us assess the quality of this webinar. We'll put the "instapoll" up on the screen in just a moment. Before you sign off, please take a moment to submit your feedback.

With that, I'd like to thank you all for attending this webinar and for spending the past hour with us and I hope you have a great rest of the day.