



## Tips for Recruiting AFI IDA Participants Who Are Ready to Save

*Not everyone is ready to participate in an IDA program, and the following tips can help you recruit potential participants who are ready to save and will be able to purchase an asset. This document also includes links to templates and examples from successful AFI grantees.*

**Recruit from within your organization.** Work with staff to identify existing clients or staff members who would be good candidates for your IDA program.

- ✓ Clients who receive the Earned Income Tax Credit or small business tax preparation through free tax preparation services such as VITA
- ✓ Participants in homebuyer education classes
- ✓ Students who complete GED classes and plan to pursue postsecondary education or training, or students involved in school-to-work programs
- ✓ Clients who have completed a credit repair plan with a consumer credit counseling service
- ✓ Participants who receive job training and employment services, especially those seeking to advance professionally
- ✓ Staff members at your organization who may be eligible to participate in the AFI IDA program

**Think from the perspective of your target population when promoting your program.** Design materials that appeal to your target audience and place them in strategic locations.

- ✓ Identify the specific audiences that comprise your target population of asset-ready savers
- ✓ Use successful IDA savers as ‘ambassadors’ to talk about your program
- ✓ Communicate how your program benefits specific segments of your target population
- ✓ Portray the subject of your outreach materials in a positive role such as provider for their family, model for their children, or in control of their financial situation
- ✓ Use language that resonates with clients and leave out confusing names or acronyms
- ✓ Design [promotional materials](#) with pictures and little text, in a relevant language, and without unnecessary and confusing information
- ✓ Place information in highly visible, high-traffic areas frequented by your target population, such as Head Start and child care facilities, community action agencies, and VITA sites
- ✓ Use social media, including your website, Twitter account and Facebook page to attract younger participants



**Develop a referral network with other organizations.** Partner with organizations who work with your target population to identify participants who are ready to save.

- ✓ Financial aid office staff at community and technical colleges
- ✓ Administrators and staff at high schools with high numbers of students who are eligible for free and reduced price lunch and likely candidates for postsecondary education
- ✓ Organizations providing first-time homebuyer clubs and classes
- ✓ Faith leaders with financial ministries
- ✓ Employers interested in boosting employee retention and productivity through an IDA program
- ✓ Small Business Development Centers who work with existing microenterprises to expand their businesses
- ✓ Workforce development and job training programs or TANF employment vendors

**Use tools to assess the readiness of potential participants.** Include information about eligibility requirements for your program and for certain asset purchases.

- ✓ A simple quiz or checklist that participants can complete online or at your site
- ✓ An assessment of participants' ability to regularly deposit earned income
- ✓ A list of steps involved with buying a home, enrolling in postsecondary education or training, or starting a new business
- ✓ Completion of financial education
- ✓ Credit reports for participants interested in buying a home

**Evaluate your outreach strategy often.** Identify which methods attract the most participants and replicate them.

- ✓ Ask participants how they found out about your program
- ✓ Develop a system for tracking the number of participants who respond to each type of outreach
- ✓ Compare the cost of different outreach methods to make sure resources are used well
- ✓ Eliminate outreach strategies that do not generate new participants
- ✓ Modify or add referral partners as needed



## Best Practices from the Field

- EARN uses an online [readiness quiz](#) as a pre-screening tool with questions such as whether a person has dependents, earns income through employment, filed a tax return in the previous year, has a Social Security Number or TIN, and is above the asset limit.
- NeighborWorks has [tools on its website](#) to help people decide if they are ready to buy a home, including secrets for first-time homebuyers, a financial fitness test, budget and money management tips, and information about buying versus renting.
- [Rural Dynamics, Inc.](#) refers participants with low credit scores to credit counseling and follows up with them when they are ready to enroll in the AFI IDA program.
- Through the [Matched College Savings Program](#), CASA of Oregon directly partners with local universities and high schools to enroll students in the AFI IDA program.
- [Action for Boston Community Development](#) calls their AFI IDA program the “Financial Futures Initiative Program”, which conveys a positive message that resonates with participants.
- The [Utah IDA Network](#) created a spreadsheet that calculates the total number of participants who hear about their program through various outreach methods, including printed materials, family and friends, church, media, an IDA program graduate, the internet, or their employer.
- [Mile High United Way](#) requires participants to complete asset counseling and paperwork to determine whether IDA program applicants are prepared to purchase an asset. Depending on the savings goal, the organization requires applicants to complete
  - A business proposal with the basic components and approximate costs of the new or existing business;
  - A homeownership assessment with employment information completed by the applicant and an assessment completed by a homeownership counselor; or
  - An education plan with information about the participant’s educational institution, career plans, and planned sources and uses of education finances, as well as a review from an educational advisor.

## Questions?

If you have any questions about these tips, please contact your AFI Program Specialist or the AFI Resource Center:

1-866-778-6037 | [info@idaresources.org](mailto:info@idaresources.org) | [www.idaresources.org](http://www.idaresources.org)