



## **New Grantee Orientation Webinar One**

### **Introduction to AFI**

**October 28, 2015**

Parker: All right. Let's go ahead and get started. Thank you for joining the first webinar, the New Grantee Orientation Series, an introduction to AFI. In this webinar, you'll learn about the key federal offices that help you implement your AFI grant, their roles and how to contact them. You will also learn how to draw down AFI grant funds and how to locate grantee resources for managing an AFI grant. This webinar will be led by Vernae Martin, the Branch Chief for Assets for Independence in the Office of Community Services and Megan Bolado, a Program Manager and Technical Assistance Provider at CFED and myself, Parker Cohen, Senior Program Manager at CFED. Twanna Nickens, a Grants Management Specialist from the Office of Grants Management is also joining us to help answer your questions. I mentioned that Megan and myself are from CFED. CFED is a national nonprofit that works with organizations that provides financial capability and asset-building services. We work with AFI to provide technical assistance to AFI grantees across the country.

Before we get started, we have a few housekeeping slides. First of all, you have the choice of dialing in with your phone or listening to the webinar through your computer. If you're watching this live and you experience technical difficulties, please use the menu on the right hand side of your screen to type in a question. On your screen is a snapshot of this interface. Also, use this box to enter questions for the presenters and we will ask them at the end of the presentation and also at the midpoint of the presentation. Please send an email to [slandry@cfed.org](mailto:slandry@cfed.org) if you have a technical issue, and that email address is on the screen. Please keep in mind that this webinar is being recorded. We've muted all attendees to ensure sound quality, so if you have any questions or issues, please type them into the query box. A picture of this is on the screen. We will make a recording and transcript of this presentation available on the IDA resources website, again this address is on the screen at a later date. This webinar will last approximately 90 minutes with time for Q&A in the middle and at the end. Feel free to type in your questions using the box at any time.

Okay, let's get started. The primary objectives of this webinar are to first, provide you with an overview of the New Grantee Orientation Series, connect you with the offices and resources that you will use in implementing your project. These offices feature specialized contacts for programmatic and financial processes so we will discuss how you should contact each one of them. We also hope to get you started by explaining how to set up your Project Reserve Fund, direct the positive procedures for your AFI grant and how to draw down federal funds which

you will really need to get work going on the ground. You can reference the entire webinar or individual sections later if you need a refresher or if you're looking for more information on a particular topic. We will send you an email with this information once it is available online.

Now, I'm going to pass things over to Vernae. Now, Vernae is going to introduce the AFI office and Key Federal Offices and Resources available to you.

All right, we appear to be having some technical difficulties with Vernae's and so I'm going to go ahead and talk you through this section. We'll introduce you to AFI and provide you with information on key federal offices and the resources available to support you in the delivery of your AFI grant. Assets for Independence is one of the social service and community development programs administered by the Office of Community Services within the Administration for Children and Families which is one of the operating divisions of the Department of Health and Human Services.

The next couple of slides will give you a brief overview of these departments. The Department of Health and Human Service's mission is to enhance and protect the health and well-being of all Americans through fostering advances in medicine, public health and social services. HHS was made up of 11 operating divisions, 8 of which are related to public health like the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and 3 of which are human service agencies. The Administration for Children and Families, ACF, is one of the key human service agencies within HHS. ACF promotes the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals and communities and is responsible for funding many programs and services including Head Start, child care, child welfare, child support, LIHEAP, family violence prevention, TANF, Community Service Block Grants as well as refugee services. I believe Vernae is back on. Are you there Vernae?

Vernae: Yes. Can you hear me now Parker?

Parker: Yes. Perfect.

Vernae: Wonderful. I apologize for that. My line just completely went dead on me there. At this point, I'm looking for this particular slide. The Office of Community Services is the lead office that administers the AFI program. The Office of Community Services manages grant competitions, awards grants, develops program policy, provides guidance and interpretation of program topics and issues, monitors grantee progress and ensures that grantees succeed with their IDA projects.

On our next slide, we'll talk a little bit here about when AFI was established to give you some background information. Assets for Independence was established by the Assets for Independence Act, part of the Community, Opportunities, Accountability and Training and Education Services Act of 1998. There are three components to AFI, funding grants for IDA projects, supporting grantees and their partners by providing training and technical assistance and ongoing research and evaluation about project administration and impacts. Through 2009,

HHS has funded over 600 AFI projects totaling approximately \$180 million. There are three key federal entities with which you will interact over the life of your grant, the AFI Program Office, the Office of Grants Management and the Program Support Center.

In the following slide, we'll introduce you to each one and explain how it serves you and how to access the office or system. To the right of each of the entities depicted here, you'll see the key aspects that we'll cover in subsequent slides. We'll start off with the AFI program office. The AFI program office is a federal office that administers the AFI program. This is home to AFI program managers and program specialists. There are three main components of the AFI program office, AFI program specialists, the AFI program website and the AFI Resource Center website. AFI program specialists are the federal representatives assigned to particular AFI grants and are responsible for the overall programmatic aspect of your grant. They provide you with legislative guidance, review your performance progress reports and answer your questions on their wide ranged topics such as eligibility, program design and uses for the AFI IDAs. You've probably already had an introductory call with your program specialist and this will be followed up by additional calls in the very near future. It's a good idea to take time to reread your funded application and to think about your project and the needs you may have to prepare to bring those concerns to your program specialist when they get back in contact with you. Your specialist will also review your regular progress reports.

Later in this series of webinars, we focus on reporting, the what, when and how of your funded project activities. Program specialists conduct bimonthly calls with each grantee to check program progress and success. This is also an opportunity for you to ask and have questions answered about any programmatic issues or concerns that you may have. At this point, I'd like to go ahead and hand this back to Parker with CFED and he'll talk about the other two program components which are valuable resources for all grantees. Parker?

Parker: Okay. Thank you, Vernae. AFI program website features official policy resources for AFI. These include the AFI Act which is the authorizing statute for AFI, and the link for this Act is on the screen. It also includes information memoranda which provide official policy guidance on specific issues and also the annual reports to Congress that AFI provides. The AFI Resource Center is the access point for the various resources you'll need to manage your AFI project. You'll find information such as these resources listed on the slide and more.

Here's what the AFI Resource Center homepage look like. To keep up with Resource Center events, periodically check out the calendar which list dates and registration links for AFI trainings, conference calls and other activities of interest to grantees. In addition, by clicking on the button, you can find information on managing your grant, reporting requirements, contact information, how to apply for future grants and many more. We particularly encourage you to explore the Managing Your AFI Grant and AFI Grantee toolkit under Topics & Tools. These helps you document templates and checklists or useful resources for all grantees. You can also find tips and resources for serving special population such as Native Americans, refugees, survivors of domestic violence, youth and people with disabilities.

The Resource Center publishes a quarterly newsletter on grantee accomplishment and new information arising from the field. It will send you occasional email blasts when there are special upcoming events or changes in policies or procedures. AFI Resource Center is your main go-to website for grant-related subjects. Make sure that you bookmark it on your computer. The AFI Resource Center was created to provide training and technical assistance to AFI grantees, their project partners and other related organizations. The Resource Center offers a range of services designed to address each grantee specific questions.

The coordinators of the AFI Resource Center are the first responders. At the Resource Center, desk operators are able to provide on-the-spot answers to many frequently-asked-questions. These questions that are less common, more complex or highly specific to your organization and grant are referred to your AFI program specialist. If your program specialist is unavailable, the help desk will record your message and route it to the appropriate AFI program specialist. Now, I'm going to turn it over to Megan to talk about the Office of Grants Management.

Megan: Thank you Parker. All right. Next, we're going to provide an overview of the Office of Grants Management or OGM, and the key elements that you'll interface with including OGM grants management specialist and GrantSolutions. First, the Office of Grants Management is the financial partner within the Office of Community Services to oversee AFI project implementation. OGM's grants management specialist assist with the financial aspects of AFI grants to include project budgets and fiscal reports.

The award package you receive from the OGM provides information for your newly-awarded AFI grant such as project start and end date, the award amount and the allocation of your award amount. It also provides you with standard terms and conditions which are the legal documents that detail the relationship between AFI grantees and the offices that support them within the Department of Health and Human Services, HHS. If there are any changes or updates to what's in your award package such as an authorizing official or other key personnel including project director or principal investigator, an official request must be made by your organization through GrantSolutions for approval by the Office of Grants Management. Be sure to keep your award documents as you will often need to use the information on those documents.

OGM's grants management specialists who are assigned by the state can help you navigation OGM. Find your grants management specialist at the link on the screen. GrantSolutions is a web-based system of record for all of AFI grants. It supports grants management functions such as updates to grantee contact information and lead personnel, changes to grant budgets, project period and other terms. And also, it's an archive of your award records and reports and includes official correspondence.

Much of your interaction with a grants management specialist will be through GrantSolutions. Importantly, you must use the system to submit your performance progress reports and your federal financial reports, SF-425. In the third webinar, we will provide more information on

reporting requirements and related reporting systems. Initially, plan to work with your grants management specialist to make sure that you set up your GrantSolutions user account and are able to manage your grant in the system. Contact your grants management specialist to set up a grantsolutions.gov account linked to your AFI grant. The GrantSolutions helpdesk can create read-only accounts but it cannot provide access to submit grant reports so only authorizing officials and principal investigator or project directors named on the NOA can have full access accounts.

Finally, we'll touch on the Payment Support Center, PSC Payment Management Services. The Payment Management Support Center or PSC works in partnership with the AFI program office and with OGM to disperse federal funds to AFI grantees. Grantees work with PSC to establish the electronic fund transfer process through which the Payment Management System or PMS work. Further along in this webinar, we will provide more details in the forms and procedures that each grantee uses to request a drawdown of its federal funds.

Okay, that's a lot of offices, systems and resources to remember so here's a quick summary of the primary contacts and what they do. First we've got the AFI program office, this is where your AFI program specialists are housed and is the keeper of information on AFI program rules and guidance. For basic questions like, "Where do I find the current income guideline", head to the AFI Resource Center. Also, the Resource Center website has tools, templates and lots of information on effective practices as well as information from webinars and other trainings. Go to your program specialist for more complex questions around AFI requirements. The Office of Grants Management is where grantsolutions.gov and your grants management specialists are housed. These resources will provide you with information on finance reporting and how changes can be made to your award documents. Lastly, the program support center is how you'll utilize payment management services. This is the department in charge of housing your grant funds and the payment management system is the portal [ph] through which you will need to access in order to draw down your funds.

That's it for this first section, introduction to AFI and key federal offices and resources. Before we move to the next section which explains how to access your AFI grant fund, let us know if you have any questions about the various federal offices and resources available to assist you in managing your grant.

Parker: Okay. There don't appear to be any questions at this time so we're going to move along to talk about, actually accessing your AFI grant funds. This section will provide you with a step by step of how to access these funds. Here's the nuts and bolts of getting the federal fund. It's very important that each grantee pay close attention to this section. Here, we will review the process for setting up your Project Reserve Fund, setting up direct deposit, requesting your AFI funds and also, a few drawdown rules to help you actually get those funds into your account.

Sometimes, grant funds are restricted when the award is made. For example, when the award made is a different amount than requested in the application, grantees must submit revised budget information before funds are made available. See if your grant has any restrictions, review Section 26 of the Notice of Award or NOA which Megan mentioned earlier. Section 26 of the original NOA also includes special conditions the AFI grantees must comply with. While these special conditions may not appear on amended versions of the NOA, compliance with these conditions continues to be required for the term of the grant. If you do have a restriction on your account, you must complete and submit to OGM the required documentation to resolve any grant restriction. Contact your OGM specialist with questions about any grant restriction. Finally, here is what the document looks like that you'll need to sign related to any grant restrictions you may have. Please keep in mind that your grant is also subject to the requirements of the HHS Grants Policy Statement and the Code of Federal Regulations 45, Part 75 and the other requirements covered in the notice of grant award under standard terms. We've included the links on this slide for you to be able to view these different requirements.

Now, I'm going to turn it over to Megan to talk about setting up your Project Reserve Fund.

Megan: Great. Thanks Parker. Okay, so once you've addressed any restrictions, you are now ready to set up your Project Reserve Fund. To access your AFI grant funds, you first need to set up a Project Reserve Fund, a bank or a credit union account that holds both federal and non-federal funds committed to the AFI project. Grantees must carefully track the allocation of grant funds to participants. In many cases, grantees set up separate reserve accounts for each AFI project for ease of tracking details like interest earned and how much is obligated, expended or still available for a new saver. You will need to have an agreement in place with your chosen financial institution about the terms of the account functioning as the Project Reserve Fund. Disagreement should spell out where it earns interest, how and how often you will receive statements, who your principal contact is at the bank or credit union, whether there are any fees associated, withholding the account or dispersing match funds.

All AFI grants you draw down must be matched dollar for dollar with non-federal cash in your Project Reserve Fund. For example, if you have \$300,000 in non-federal match and deposit, you could draw down \$300,000 of your federal AFI award, so it is dollar to dollar. It's best to deposit all of your non-federal and draw your federal down in Year 1 but in any case, make sure that your non-federal deposits and parallel federal is drawn down as soon as possible. Often, grantees use additional funds to support their AFI work. But remember, all funds in the reserve account are subject to program allocation guidelines, so any additional funds should be held separately from this project reserve account.

When setting up your Project Reserve Fund, please keep in mind the limitations on uses for Project Reserve Fund. AFI legislation, excuse me, spells out exactly how the funds in the Project Reserve Fund, both the federal funds and non-federal match are to be used. 85% of the project funds, both the federal AFI grant and the non-federal funds goes directly to match participant savings. Of the rest of that, 2% of the AFI grant fund must be used for data

collection. No more than 7.5% of the AFI grants can go for administrative expenses such as program management, reporting, recruitment, enrolment and monitoring. Finally, 5.5% of the AFI grant fund may be used for non-administrative functions like case management, budgeting, financial education and credit counseling. The portion of the non-federal fund that is not required to be used for participant match may be used for any of the uses described above and also in Section 407C1 [ph] of the AFI Act. This portion of the non-federal funds is not required to be expended exactly as the AFI grant funds are expended. Percentages are established by the AFI Act.

Okay, so a couple of key other things to remember. One, only draw down federal funds equal to the amount of non-federal cash into the Project Reserve Fund. And then two, keep a clear audit trail which will enable you to identify the source of funds for any expenditure. All right, I'm going to turn it back over to Parker who will talk about setting up direct deposit.

Parker: Thanks Megan. In order to be able to ultimately draw down your funds, you'll need to set up direct deposit for your Project Reserve Fund. You'll need your notice of award to complete the standard form known as SF 1199A which can be downloaded from the link on the AFI resources center as provided on the screen. You'll also need a Payment Management System Access Form that you can also download from the AFI Resource Center site or from the DPM site. Here, we have provided the links for the division of Payment Management System or PMS and the Federal Financial Report or FFR user forms. These required forms let DPM know who should have access to your account. Keep a copy for your record and send a copy to your AFI program specialist.

Your next step will be to set up for direct deposit of AFI funds to your project reserve account via electronic funds transfer. To make sure that your 1199A form for direct deposit is accepted, verify that the information matches your notice of award exactly. The 1199A will be rejected if any information is inconsistent with that on the NOA. The instructions on the AFI Resource Center direct you to the relevant boxes on the award document that must match the 1199A information exactly. Occasionally, a grantee has not yet established an agreement with the financial institution before the award. However, the financial institution and account routing information is essential to completing the 1199A form. Please note that the original document may not have any evidence of alterations.

Once your 1199A and your PMS user access form are ready, mail them to your DPM liaison. The address for this is on the screen. And once again, this webinar will be available to you after this time and we will send you a link with this information so that you have it for your record. Send scans of this information and email attachments to your grants management specialist and to your program specialist. Your grants management specialist and program specialist can be found once again, on the AFI Resource Center website.

Here's where you find your PSC liaison. Your assigned payment management services liaison will vary depending on your location and whether your organization is a university, nonprofit,

government or tribal group. For those that are governmental or tribal groups, they'll use the governmental and tribal payment branch. These, as it sounds, work primarily with government entities such as state and local governments and Indian tribes with HHS grants and the link for this is on your screen. The university and nonprofit payment branch works with colleges, universities and all other nonprofit as well as for-profit organizations that have HHS grants and the link for that PSC liaison is on the screen as well. Now, I'm going to throw it back over to Megan to talk about the request draw down of funds.

Megan: Excellent. Thanks Parker. Okay. Now, you're ready to request a drawdown of the funds. Once you're setup with the PMS username and password and the direct deposit is setup, you can now draw down the federal funds using the electronic funds request process. Instructions for these are in the PSC/PMS website. Note, to avoid being locked out of your account, all grantees especially those with multiple federal grants should make sure you input the exact user ID and password and the exact grant number. Should you inadvertently request funds to be deposited from the wrong grant or to the wrong account, it can take a very long time to straighten out. You can draw down your grant funds over the grant period so long as you'll have an equal amount of non-federal cash match in the project reserve account. In fact, the rules for AFI are actually different than they are for many federal grants and we encourage you to draw down every penny as soon as possible - that account earned interest. Further, you need that money in the bank for participants that open IDAs. The balance of the project reserve fund must be at least equal to the amount needed to cover obligations with the match amount to participants who have opened their IDAs. To draw down, you should also be current on any reporting. It's also true that many grantees get approval for additional time of up to a year to complete project activities, but you must remember, no funds can be drawn down after the end of the original five year project period.

Parker: Thanks Megan. As a recap, after addressing any grant restrictions, you'll want to set up your project reserve fund within a federally-insured financial institution or a state-insured financial institution and then deposit your non-federal match fund. Next, you'll contact PSC to set up direct deposit and identify the individual or individuals who will have access to the account, then you're ready to use payment management systems, electronic funds transfer to ultimately draw down your AFI funds. Okay, that is the content that we hope to present today. I want to turn it over to all the participants and new grantees out there. Do any of you have any questions about the steps around drawing down and managing your AFI funds or anything else?

Great. As a reminder, we're joined by Twanna Nickens who is an OGM grants specialists. This is I think a good question for you Twanna. This person says, "I'm a little lost on drawing down funds. Which one has to be drawn down first?"

Twanna: Can you repeat that question Parker?

Parker: Yeah. I think this person is just looking for a little bit of a refresher about drawing down funds and is confused about what the first steps she should take.

Twanna: Assuming that your non-federal funds are in your project reserve account, you can then draw down that matching dollar amount from the Division of Payment Management.

Parker: Right. Thank you. Go ahead.

Twanna: Just to show that you have the non-federal dollars in your account and you can draw down.

Parker: Great. Thank you. I think the answer to this is make sure those non-federal dollars are in your project reserve fund and then you will be able to drive down those federal dollars.

Twanna: Yes.

Parker: Thank you Twanna.

Another question is how long between requesting payment system access, setting up direct deposit and actually receiving AFI funds, can you walk us through a general timeline, Twanna of how long this typically takes?

Twanna: I'm going to say, it's going to take a week as long as there are no alterations to the Division of Payment Management 1199 form as well as how soon you can get the required documents to DPM, Division of Payment Management. In my role [ph], it should only take about a week if everything flows gently as we expected to.

Parker: Great. Thank you. The next question is, this is not our first grant award. Has the drawdown process changed recently at all or is it the same?

Twanna: As far as I know, it hasn't changed.

Parker: That's my understanding as well. Great. That's all the questions we have at this time, but I'm going to give everybody a couple of more moments to think through everything we discussed today and give you a chance to ask any questions that are coming to mind.

While we're waiting on that, I want to put this slide up on the screen. This slide details the upcoming grantee, new grantee orientation overview. One thing that's coming up next that I think could be very useful for many of you, especially if you're not a returning grantee, if you're a first time grantee or you haven't been a grantee in a while, we recommend attending this program management system training webinar that will occur on Wednesday, November, 18. It will provide training on systems access, completing a payment request, performing accounting queries, requesting reports and completing the federal financial report. Even if you are a returning grantee, it's a good opportunity to get a refresher.

It appears we have another question coming in. Is there anything that we don't need to submit anew if our organization is an existing grantee? Basically, is there any information that we

don't need to redo since we've already done this in prior process, or do we have to do it all again for a new grant?

Twanna: Every step that you take for your previous grant and grant pertaining [ph] to reporting, semiannual reports, program progress reports, just run it just like your previous grants. There's nothing at, nothing has changed with the AFI program, maybe just the systems. Yeah, everything is the same.

Parker: Got you. Thank you. Here's a question about when to expect contact from a grants management specialist. First off, if we haven't yet received a call from our grants management and specialist, should we initiate that conversation?

Twanna: I will say initiate that conversation because we, grants management specialists are in charge of individually up to 150 grantees. Some might have 90, some have 150, so we're asking that you do contact us because we have a lot to do. And if we do not get in touch with you in a timely manner, call and email. But when you first get your grant, I would say call and say, "Hey, I'm here."

Parker: Great. Thank you. A follow-up to that question I asked a moment ago about if you're an existing grantee, I think what this person is asking is, she wrote another question to clarify this, does she have to go through the whole process again for a new grant, the same as she did the first time in terms of sending it up in payment management system and drawing down funds, or is there anything that because they've done this before that they don't have to do again?

Twanna: Yes. You still would have to send in the 1199 like it's new. Even though DPM funds is lumped into one account, your different grant, I'm going to say for lack [ph] is going to be subcontracts under the Division of Payment Management, so yeah, I would do so.

Parker: Okay, great. Thank you. All right, so we don't have any more questions at this time but keep them coming. I'm going to keep walking through what's coming up for the new grantee orientation. On webinar 2, launching your AFI project, it will be held on Thursday, November 19th. This webinar will introduce key AFI requirements as well as tools and resources for successfully launching a new AFI grant. Grantees will also have the opportunity to ask questions about project design. The third webinar which we've alluded to a few times throughout this presentation is around data and reporting. This webinar will explain the types of reports you're required to file and the reporting deadlines throughout the year. The webinar also includes discussion of using data to help manage your project.

Additional, we will be holding a conference call November 5th for first time grantees as well as those that are reenrolling after a lapse on AFI grant. We'll be reaching out individually to those of you who should participate in this call, and in fact, you should have already received an invitation to this. If you haven't, please contact us again at [slandry@cfed.org](mailto:slandry@cfed.org). But this call entry is through your program specialist, provide you with understanding of AFI technical

assistance for new grantees as well as giving you an opportunity to ask any questions that you have about AFI or what it's like to get your grant started and off the ground. All right, we don't have, wait, excuse me, we do have a new question. This question is if an account gains interest, does the participant receive the interest? This might be more of a Vernae question, if you have an answer at this time.

Vernae: At this time, I don't have a specific answer for that question. We will be able to take down this particular question and get back to you with the definitive answer to that.

Parker: Yeah. We will record your contact information and so the interest allocation is a complicated issue. We'll get back to you with a detailed answer. Great. I think that that was the last question we had, but feel free to continue to type them in as I'm wrapping up here. I want to turn it over to Vernae to offer any parting words before we sign off today.

Vernae: Thank you, Parker. Again, thank you so much for joining us today. We are looking forward to working with you. Your program specialist should have reached out to you by now to introduce themselves. In some cases, there may be some grantees that still need to be contacted. But in the meantime, feel free to reach out to those program specialists and to our program office if you have any questions at this point. We're looking forward to you joining the upcoming webinars and getting your project off the ground.

Parker: Great. Thank you, Vernae. There is one last question here which is, how do we register for the program or the, I believe, he mean the, yeah, the program management system training webinar? This is the first time ... information. We will send out a link to this after the webinar to all participants so that you have it because it will take a little bit of time before our presentation, everything is online. But we will be able to send you a copy of this presentation and also in that email, we'll include the link where you can register for this. Also, you should be able to register for this through the IDA resources website that we showed earlier. There's a calendar at the top of the screen and that should have all of the upcoming events and you can click on that and register via that way as well. We'll be sure to follow up and send you all the link because as I said, I think this is a really important one for you all to be a part of. Great. If there are no further questions, I'm going to just wrap up and just say on behalf of CFED and our colleagues at AFI, we'd like to thank you all for participating in this first webinar. And once you've gotten all the technical and physical requirements in place, you'll be ready to start designing your AFI grant program. That's what we're really going to talk about in the next webinar is launching your AFI project. Thank you for your great questions and your attention throughout this presentation and we're dedicated to providing you with the service you need to successfully execute your project. I'm getting one last question which is a question about the CFED contact on the line. My name is Parker Cohen, and Megan Bolado is the other presenter here today. We'll be in contact with many of you as we conduct the AFI technical assistance over the lives of your grants. We look forward to it. All right, we're going to go ahead and sign off. Thank you very much and have a great rest of your day.