



An Introduction to the 2015 AFI Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)

May 2015



Webinar Objectives

- For listeners to:
 - Learn how to access the FOA
 - Learn the application due dates for FY 2015-2017
 - Become familiar with the content of the FOA
 - Learn where they can get answers to questions about the FOA and the application process





Assets for Independence (AFI) Program

- Assets for Independence (AFI) is a discretionary grant program administered by the Office of Community Services (OCS) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF).
- Administration for Children and Families (ACF)
 - Part of the US Department of Health & Human Services.
 - One of the key *human services* agencies within HHS.
 - Promotes the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals and communities.
 - Responsible for funding many programs and services, including Head Start, child care, child welfare, child support, LIHEAP, family violence prevention, TANF, CSBG, and refugee services.





Assets for Independence (AFI) Program

- AFI was created by Congress in 1998 to demonstrate and support an assets-based approach for increasing the economic self-sufficiency of low-income individuals and families.
- What is asset building?
Supporting the acquisition of assets (both tangible, such as a home, and intangible, such as education) that can increase opportunities, build wealth, and increase economic stability.
 - Income-support strategies, such as cash assistance and SNAP (food stamps), act as a safety net.
 - Asset-building strategies act as a ladder.





Assets for Independence (AFI) Program

- AFI funds projects that provide Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) and related services to low-income people.
 - IDAs are matched savings accounts with a specific goal: purchasing an asset.
 - AFI IDAs may be used for:
 - To purchase a first home,
 - To capitalize a business, or
 - To fund post-secondary education or training.



Accessing the FOA

- Download the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/foa/index.cfm?switch=foa&fon=HHS-2015-ACF-OCS-EI-1005>





Application Due Dates

- Upcoming application due date:
 - **FY 2015: June 15, 2015**
 - FY 2016 and 2017 deadlines also listed in FOA
 - Deadline for electronic application submission:
11:59 p.m. ET, on dates listed



ES & Section I

- Executive Summary – key points, including modification information
- Section I. Program Description – more details
 - Program Overview
 - Program Requirements:
 - Cost Sharing
 - Reserve Fund
 - Limitations on Uses of Funds
 - Skills and Information for Economic Self-Sufficiency
 - Participant Eligibility
 - Participant Savings Match
 - Withdrawals for Emergencies and Qualified Expenses (Asset Purchases)
 - Evaluation Activities
 - Administrative Requirements and Reporting
 - Recognition of Same-Sex Marriages



Section I, continued

- Section I. Program Description
 - Project Design
 - Definition of Terms
 - Budget Period
 - Building Neighborhood Capacity Program
 - Business Capitalization
 - Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation
 - Choice Neighborhoods
 - Community Action Agencies (CAAs)
 - Documentation of Non-federal Cash Commitment(s)
 - Eligible Educational Institution
 - Emergency Withdrawals
 - Federally Qualified Health Centers
 - First-Home Purchase
 - Opportunity Youth
 - Post-Secondary Educational Expenses
 - Poverty Guidelines
 - Project Partner
 - Promise Neighborhoods
 - Promise Zones
 - Qualified Plan
 - Refugee
 - Savings Plan Agreement
 - Third-party Agreement
 - Tribal Government
 - Victim of Human Trafficking



Sections II & III

- Section II. Federal Award Information
 - “Awards are made in whole dollar amounts only.”
- Section III. Eligibility Information
 - III.1. Eligible Applicants
 - All **non-profit entities with 501(c)(3) status**;
 - **State or local government agencies, or tribal governments**, applying jointly with a non-profit with 501(c)(3) status;
 - Financial institutions that are federally certified as either a **Low-Income Credit Union or a Community Development Financial Institution** and that demonstrate a collaborative relationship with a local community-based organization whose activities are designed to address poverty in the community and the needs of community members for economic independence and stability; and
 - Entities deemed eligible under Section 405(g) of the AFI Act, specifically the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority and the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.



Section III.2

- Section III. Eligibility Information
 - III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching
 - The federal AFI grant must comprise no more than 50 percent of the total project budget.
 - Applicants must provide documentation of a non-federal cash commitment.
 - Applicants should not request an AFI grant amount that exceeds the amount of non-federal cash commitment that is documented in their application.
 - For specific requirements for non-federal cash commitment documentation, see *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission*.



Section III.3

- Section III. Eligibility Information
 - III.3. Other
 - DUNS and SAM registration. Also see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto>
 - **Application Disqualification Factors:**
 - requesting an amount above the ceiling of \$1,000,000
 - applications from entities that are not eligible for AFI grants
 - failure to provide documentation of non-federal cash commitment
 - submission after the application due date and time
 - paper applications from applicants who have not been approved for exemption from electronic submission requirement





Section IV

- Section IV. Application and Submission Information
 - IV.1. Address to Request Application Package (also available on Grants.gov)
 - IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission
 - Technical requirements: page limits, font and formatting, the two-file requirement, the authorized organizational representative and their role in submitting the application, and required forms, assurances, and certifications
 - Application contents



Two Files

File One: Project Description (75 pages)

- Project Description Table of Contents
- Project Summary/Abstract
- Approach – Project Design
- Approach – Work Plan
- Approach – Project Viability and Fit with the AFI Program
- Approach – Project Management
- Approach – Staffing Plan
- Project Timeline and Milestones
- Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds
- Project Budget and Budget Justification

File Two: Appendices (150 pages)

- Appendices Table of Contents
- Documentation of Non-Federal Cash Commitment(s)
- Legal Status of Applicant Entity - Proof of Non-Profit Status (if applicable)
- Additional Eligibility Documentation - Governmental Entities (if applicable)
- Additional Eligibility Documentation - CDFIs and LICUs (if applicable)
- Documentation for Bonus Points (if applicable)
- Other Supporting Documentation



Approach

- Project Design

- *“Consider the circumstances of potential participants and design their AFI project to maximize participants’ opportunity to save and complete their asset purchases.”*

- Work Plan

- *“Consistent with all other aspects of the proposed project, such as the Project Design, the timing of non-federal funding availability as detailed in the applicant’s non-federal cash commitment documentation, and the Project Timeline and Milestones”*
- *“If the proposed project includes project partners, their roles and activities must be clearly identified in the work plan.”*





Approach

- Project Viability and Fit with the AFI Program
 - *“If the applicant is implementing an on-going AFI project serving the same target population in the same service area, the applicant must demonstrate that there is sufficient need and demand for a new AFI project.”*
 - *“The applicant must demonstrate the viability of the proposed project with regard to the asset purchases included in the design. For example, if first-home purchases are planned under the proposed project, the applicant must demonstrate that there is available affordable housing stock in the geographic service area or otherwise addresses how first-home purchases will be feasible under the project.”*





Approach

- Project Management
- Staffing Plan
 - *“Adequate and aligned with the proposed project activities.”*
 - *“May provide resumes, organizational charts, position descriptions, and other supporting documentation in the Appendices.”*



Project Description: Additional Sections

- Bonus Points
- Project Timeline and Milestones
- Geographic Location
- Legal Status of Applicant Entity
- Additional Eligibility Documentation
 - See *Section III. Eligibility Information*
- Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds



Budget and Budget Justification

- Cover the full 5-year project and budget period
- Follow limitations on uses identified in Section IV.5
- The budget must clearly display the allocation of both federal and non-federal funds to an object category and relevant line items. Funds allocated to participant savings match for qualified withdrawals must be included in the Other category.
- The narrative budget justification must provide a breakdown of project expenditures according to requirements of Section 407 and 410 of the AFI Act, as detailed in *Section IV.5. Funding Restrictions*.



Budget: Documentation of Non-Federal Cash Commitment

- Universal requirements:
 - Specific AFI grant application to which the commitment is being made
 - Amount of commitment
 - When cash will be available
- Additional documentation requirements for non-federal cash commitments from specific sources:
 - Third-party organizations
 - Applicant organization
 - State, local, tribal legislative entity
 - Individuals
 - Other
- Guidance: <http://idaresources.acf.hhs.gov/documentation>



Section IV, continued

- IV.2, continued – Application Submission Options
- IV.3. Submission Dates and Times
- IV.4. Intergovernmental Review
- IV.5. Funding Restrictions
 - *“The portion of the non-federal funds that is not required to be used for participant match may be used for any of the uses described in 407(c)(1) of the AFI Act, and this portion of the non-federal funds is not required to be expended exactly as the federal funds are expended.”*
- IV.6. Other Submission Requirements





FOA Section V

- V. Application Review Information
 - V.1. Criteria
 - Approach (Max: 60 points)
 - Project Timeline and Milestones (Max: 5 points)
 - Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds (Max: 10 points)
 - Project Budget and Budget Justification (Max: 25 points)



Evaluation Criteria

- Approach (Max: 60 points)
 - Project Design (0-10)
 - Work Plan (0-15)
 - Project Viability and Fit with the AFI Program (0-15)
 - Project Management (0-10)
 - Staffing Plan (0-10)
- Project Timeline and Milestones (Max: 5 points)
- Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds (Max: 10 points)
- Project Budget and Budget Justification (Max: 25 points)
 - Budget and Budget Justification (0-10)
 - Documentation of Non-federal Cash Commitment(s) (0-15)



Evaluation Criteria (cont'd)

- Bonus Points (Max: 15 points)
 - Federal Place-based Initiatives (0-5)
 - Key Collaborations (0-5)
 - Unserved States and Territories (0-5)
- *Section IV.2: “When appropriate, applicants should **cite the evaluation criteria that are relevant to specific components of their project description**. Awarding offices use this and other information in making their funding recommendations. It is important, therefore, that this information be included in the application in a manner that is clear and complete.”*



FOA Sections V-VIII

- V. Application Review Information
 - V.2. Review and Selection Process
 - Initial ACF Screening
 - Objective Review and Results
 - AFI Program Review and Results
 - V.3. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates
- VI. Award Administration Information
 - VI.1. Award Notices
 - VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements
 - VI.3. Reporting
- VII. Agency Contacts
- VIII. Other Information
- Appendix

AFI Resource Center

Phone: 1-866-778-6037

Email: info@idaresources.org

Web: idaresources.acf.hhs.gov



Application Resources

- AFI Resource Center “Apply for an AFI Grant”
 - AFI Project Builder & Toolkit
 - Prospective Grantee webinars
 - Understanding the AFI Program
 - Developing Resources and Partners
 - Preparing and Submitting an AFI Application
- ACF How to Apply for a Grant
 - <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto>





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