



## **AFI for Promise Zones**

**May 14, 2015**

Emily: My name is Emily Apple Newbie. I'm with the AFI Resource Center and we will be hosting the call but we are cohosting the call with the Department of Housing Urban and Development as well as with the Department of Agriculture. Let me turn it over to my partners to introduce themselves and welcome you to today's webinar.

Margeaux: Great. Well thank you so much everyone for joining us today for this webinar on the Administration for Children and Families Assets for Independence program. I'm Margeaux Akazawa. I serve as a desk officer with the Promise Zones team here at Housing and Urban Development. And I'm joined with Hiwot Gebremariam who's also a desk officer with the Promise Zones team at USDA and is serving the rural and tribal Promise Zone. As I'm sure that many of you know Promise Zone is a place-based initiative where the federal government partner with and invest in urban, rural and tribal communities across the countries to create jobs, increase economic opportunity, improve educational opportunities, and reduce serious and violent crime. We currently have 13 Promise Zone designees around the country. The first five were announced in 2014 and eight new zones were announced a few weeks ago on April 28<sup>th</sup>. Promise Zones is an interagency initiative and involve twelve federal agency partners. The US Department of Health and Human Services is one of these partners and has offered several funding and technical assistance opportunities with benefits for Promise Zones. One of these is the Assets for Independence Program.

Hiwot: Thank you Margeaux for the introduction. We are—this is [Hewitt Gabra Mariam] from USDA. We are happy to have staff from the Assets for Independence Program present today on this year's grant competition and to have representative from the Choctaw Nation Promise Zone. Our first round tribal Promise Zones speak about their experiences, [Indiscernible] [0:02:03] and lessons learned from being both a Promise Zones designee and—and AFI grantee. We hope the webinar today will provide Promise Zones designee, Promise Zones finalist, and other interested communities with valuable information on this asset building program and answer your questions regarding the application process. Out of consideration of our speakers and participants, we would like to remind everyone to please mute your phones, lines during the webinar. Also, note that we will have time at the end of the presentation for Q&A. With that, we would like to turn it over to our presenters from the Assets for Independence program.

Emily: Great! Thanks so much. And—and building off of what [Hewitt] just said, yes, we have a Q&A pod that's kind of on the right hand side of the screen for you—for those of you who are—who are joining through the Adobe Connect but everybody has already been muted. So we won't take questions over the phone. We will just take them through the—the Q&A pod. And we're actually recording, today, the Webinar so we can make it available to other members of the Promise Zones community. And so that will be available on our website going forward [Indiscernible] [0:03:24] here on the slide. So we've heard from Margeaux and Hiwot and I am Emily Apple Newbie at AFI. And then we are going to hear from Dawn Hix who is the IDA Coordinator at Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma as well as her counterparts in the Choctaw Career Development Center and I believe from the Promise Zones program there as well so I'm really excited to hear from them.

But I wanna start off by giving you some--some basics about the Assets for Independence program overall into discretionary grant program administered by the Office of Community Services and the Administration for Children and Families which is part of health and human services. ACF promotes the economic and social well-being of families, children, and individuals and communities through programs such as Head Start [TNX CSPG] [0:04:14] and obviously AFI. So AFI was created by congress in 1998 to demonstrate an asset-based approach for increasing the economic self-sufficiency of low income individuals and families. Asset-building is an anti-poverty approach that supports the acquisitions of assets. They can increase the opportunities and build wealth for low-income family. These assets can be tangible things such as a home or intangible such as an education.

AFI fund projects at the community level that would provide Individuals Development Accounts or IDAs and related services to low-income people. So the IDAs, these are the core of what AFI's all about. Their matched savings account with the specific goal of helping someone purchase an asset. An AFI IDAs may be used for one of three asset goals: purchase a first home, capitalize a business, or to fund post-secondary education or training. So the reason why we are reaching out to the Promise Zones community is because a new funding opportunity announcement came out for the Assets for Independence program last month and in it there was a section for bonus points that could be achieved by partnering with a federal place-based initiative including a Promise Zones, not rentee, but participant.

And so there has you know have to be formally documented, you have to have roles and responsibilities but that's the way to earn up to five extra points in an AFI application but you know what's more—you know we think that there is a great opportunity to leverage the good works that Promise Zones are already doing for them to leverage AFI IDAs to—to help move people out of poverty and really you know from a place of--into a better place of economic stability and—and really reduced intergenerational poverty and IDAs are such a great tool for that.

So let me introduce more about the concept of how IDAs, Individual Development Accounts work. So you can see how it really would fit in with a Promise Zones project or other community-based, other place-based projects. So I'm gonna talk through the details of it and then I'm gonna walk through a graphical representation. So we have you know pretend the person Kim. She wants to purchase her first home. She has found an AFI grantee in her area and applied to be part of their program. They determined she's eligible and she opens her IDA. They're gonna offer her match rate of \$2 for every \$1 she saves so it's a 2-1 match rate. So for three years, Kim is gonna save money into her IDA account. She's gonna save about \$55 per month of her earned income and she's working towards the goal of \$2,000 saved in her IDA. You know most of us, but especially the low-income populations that are qualified for AFI don't just have \$2,000 sitting around.

So they have to make those deposits over a period of time and with AFI it's a minimum of six months and up to something that can be set by the grantee for how long they have to save. And I look forward to hearing what—how they made that work in—in the Choctaw Nation. So during this time when she's saving, Kim's gonna receive a tax assistance like from a VITA site, financial education, and a home ownership preparation from the AFI grantee and its partners in the community. So Kim's gonna save for \$2,000 and she's gonna purchase her home using that saving plus \$4,000 that she has received from—or that has gone to her purchase from the AFI grantee.

So here's a graphical depiction of how it work. So in the light blue box you see—you see Kim savings of \$2,000. In the dark blue box, you see the \$4,000 that she received in match and that means she has \$6,000 for home—for—for her home purchase. So a few things to note about this, you see that there's an error going into the dark blue box that indicates that—that \$4,000 half of it came from the federal AFI grant and half of it came from non-federal sources that the grantee has to commit at the time of application. And that's a requirement—a cost sharing requirement that's true of all AFI applicants, a one-to-one non-federal cash match has to be brought to the project and it's used each time participants make a purchase.

The other [query] [0:08:54] I want to make is about the six—the \$6,000 for her home purchase. Depending on where you live, that may or may not be enough for the down payment and closing cost. You know probably not many places any more. So what I would say is it's important to understand that Kim did not buy her house just with this IDA. She probably learned about other sources of down payment assistance and financial assistance and brought in her EITC and she leveraged a low-cost mortgage loan that her home-ownership program helped hook her up with. You know it's—we know that it's not just about the IDA but we hope that you can make AFI IDAs a piece of the puzzle to making these assets purchases affordable for the low income populations that she worked with.

So you might be wondering who can participate in these projects? And basically it's—it's—you know it's based on household income. So there are two ways of looking at eligibility and you

can use either one. So first is if an individual is part of the household that is eligible for assistance under the state tenants program then that individual would be eligible. Again, you'll hit state tenants' eligibility level or you can look at the AGI and net worth of their household. So the adjusted growth income of the household has to be under 200% of the federal poverty level, that's the HHS federal poverty level or they have to be under the earned income tax credit limits.

And then you wanna look at their net worth and the net worth of the household as a whole has to be under \$10,000 excluding the value of a primary residence in one [Indiscernible] [0:10:38]. So that's how—what you would look at in terms of participant eligibility. Now, you can—as a— as a grantee, you can set stricter or not entrepreneur eligibility rules but you can select who you want to be part of your program. You can narrow it down to say you know, “I wanna serve people who are only in the communities under my Promise Zones site or only residence of a certain county or zip code or only you know low income youth in this area.” You can be a little bit more focus than that.

The other piece that's not technically is an eligibility criteria but is relevant here is that the individual saver has to have a source of earned income to make their deposits [Indiscernible] [0:11:24]. So it's definitely okay if they have sources of financial assistance coming into their house like you know tenants and—and food stamps and—and LIHEAP but they do have to have a source of earned income that is sufficient to make their deposits grow.

So with that I'm going to—now, that I've given you a little bit of a taste of what the AFI IDA project looks like, I'm going to turn it over to the focus—they're here from the Choctaw Nation to give us an idea specifically of what their AFI project looks like and how they've tailored it to the needs of the people in their community. And then I'd love to hear also about how it tied into the Promise Zones project that they have. So Dawn, can we—do you wanna go ahead and get started?

Dawn: Yes, thank you Emily. This is Dawn Hix. I'm—I'm with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. And I'd like to talk about our—our particular IDA program. And—and we've actually called ours 'The Choctaw Asset Building program.' We're called 'CAB' for short. Originally, our goal was just is 340 Choctaw individuals and/or families to manage their money and credit wisely. We wanted to empower them. And we are actually able to go—you mentioned all three different asset purchases and we offer all three asset purchases. We do the first time home purchase, post-secondary education, and a small business capitalization. We started our grant. We were awarded June the 15<sup>th</sup> of 2009. We actually operate two different grants at this time but I'm gonna focus on our first grant. We're actually in our closing of our first grant at this time. The Choctaw Nation matched the award grant was for 800,000 and the Choctaw Nation match fund of 1,000,000. The reason for that is the Choctaw Nation wanted to have a 3-1 match for our first time home purchase and—and with that larger match fund for our

first time home purchase, we're able to offer 100 home purchase with the 3-1 match. So that's why we chose to do that.

We actually have a picture on our next slide of--of one of our savers. In a previous career, I was a high school teacher and this is actually a former student of mine. I had this little girl in class as a junior in high school. And this is a picture of Crystal. Crystal actually started this account for a home purchase. She changed over to education and--and there are--our clients are actually able to do that. If they are starting that one pathway and they see that that might not be a good choice for an asset purchase for them at this particular point in their lives then we can make that change for them. So she changed over to an education asset purchase. She graduated last Saturday. We're all very proud of her with the Bachelor of Arts and Communication.

While she was going through our program, she did resay financial education and she actually--we have a quote from her about how she was able to--to learn how to--to apply her budget, stick to it, and how she learned more about her credit score. Crystal was actually able to come back on our second grant that I mentioned earlier and that's when she was able to make her home purchase for both, she and her daughter, so that they could have a home for themselves. So that was a wonderful place. I'm so glad that I was able to be there for her at that time.

On our next slide, we have why AFI? Well for our program, the Choctaw Asset Building program, we're under the umbrella of Career Development. And at this time, I'd like to ask Robin to talk about Career Development and what all it does. It offers our tribal members a variety of career guidance, services but it's a wonderful program and she's actually the Director of the Career Development program.

Robin: Good afternoon. Like Dawn said, my name is Robin Counts and I am the Director of Career Development program. Through the Career Development program, we offer our tribal members nationwide and career guiding pre-guidance counseling and we analyze each one of the tribal members to see what their needs are based upon their careers. And if they need to go to school and obtain a license or industry credential which is one of our criteria is that we encourage that licensure work for to be competitive in the work force. If they need training then we will match them with training. If they need financial assistance to go to school, we provide that. If they need academic remediation to be successful in school then we provide that.

But basically with this program, our goal is to provide a pathway for our tribal members to find a career that will help support them and their family. And we just don't like that the AFI program and the [MAC] [0:16:55] savings program was such a good fit for a lot of our tribal members that were participating in the pre-development program. If we do have some tribal members, for example, that are trying to learn a trade like welding and some of them want to start their own business and this at the time that they're in school they qualify for the program. And while they're saving, they are learning their trade and then we are also providing business

startups advice in technical assistants to the tribal members and so they're getting out of school, learning their trade, and then they have some you know some funding, capital money for their business.

So it's been such a great fit and you know we also--you know also--another thing with our program is that we offer employment services to go along with that. We brought a program in, another program underneath the Career Development, called the Native American Business Resource Center. And we brought on a staff member that that's what she provide is technical assistant to entrepreneurs to help them with business startup or business expansion. Thank you. Also, AFI help desk bring in organized financial education and help us work with our partners to bring in VITA sites to help our clients. So that was another positive thing that AFI help desk bring in some organized pieces to our--to our clients.

On our next slide, this kinda explains our--our market. We are 60% women. 79% are less than 30 years of age. So we have a younger market. It's getting younger all the time as I'm getting older. 61% has some college or they are degrade. Seven--93 live and rule. We're in Oklohoma. That's where we're based. We're Southeastern Oklahomas where we are based out of. Our service area at this particular point is Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas. In the beginning of our program, we focus on the Promise Zones which is just basically the Southeastern part of the state of Oklahoma. And then we expanded from there. So we started in a smaller area and then we grew. 73% of our clients have no children in the home.

On our next slide, we have just some--some information that you might find interesting about our number of successful savers in the average saving per asset. A lot of our clients do not need to save for the full amount. We can match up to \$2,000. And they do not necessarily need to save for the full amount of the 2,000. However, like Robin was saying you know in Career Development, they're able to--to help them financially. So a lot of our education savers especially are not gonna need that full match but our home buyers get into the habit--the habit of saving and they don't wanna stop. So with our home buyers, we see them over saving and also with our business, we see them over saving which we love it because they're in that habit and they--they're so proud of themselves.

Our match rate for business savers, we do a 2-1 match for business and education. Like I said, we can match up to 2,000 with 4,000 of matching funds. We're gonna end up with 6,000 total. On our home buyers, we match up to 2,000 with six. We can match up to two per household. So could you imagine having \$16,000 to put down on your first time home? That is--that is life changing and that happens quite often and we're so blessed to be part of that. Our savings timeline is 6 months to 36 months. And you asked me earlier about the time scale, I'll be honest with you, we have found in our experience our clients that saved for less than 36 months are actually more successful. In the beginning, they like the 36 months for the cushion but then once they get on the role of saving, they'll increase their saving amount and reduce their months of saving because they get excited about it. They can do the savings. They're

graduating with a higher income. So now they can increase their savings. Our match savings amount, like I stated, is \$2,000.

The time scale that we have for our staff is about 50 hours. Our software that we use is Vista Share Outcome Tracker. Our bank transactions are uploaded to our software daily. I do that as part of my routine. Our referrals are made by our career counselors. Our career counselors we have approximately 12 that service our area. We also—we also have other areas where we do word of mouth is a huge, huge part of our referrals. The Choctaw Nation has so many other programs that they're able to refer us, our clients, and a lot of those—we all work together for one goal and that is to increase the power of the Choctaw Nation members. Our partners include area school. We—we work with Career Tech Centers Higher Education Institute, Native American Business Resource Center that Robin mentioned earlier is a wonderful resource for us, Small Business Development Center, Rural Enterprises of Oklahoma is also a wonderful resource for us, and we have our Choctaw Housing Authority, Big Five, Little Dixie Community Action Agency.

Honestly, we have so many partners. I could not list them all. Once again, when you're working in a rural area you really learned to rely on your partners and we have wonderful partners that we work with. Lessons learned, we have a lot of lessons learned. Breaking generational poverty is not easy. Assets are defined in different ways for different people. And that one was—that one was probably a hard one. You need to remember that we're not all raised in the same environment. Not all of us have the same goals. Focus on restoring freedom and pride. Word of mouth is the biggest selling point. I cannot stress that enough.

Another thing is that you need to ask your organization before you start a program like this, "Is there a true need for a match savings?" If there's not, you might wanna look into a different program because you're going to need ownership in this. Will there be financial support? Will there be enough partners for this program? Like I said, we are so blessed here that we have quite a few partners that are still wanting to work with us and continue to work with us. With the Promise Zones coming more and we have more contact with different programs wanting to work with us. What match rate would work best for your organization and asset purchase? And that's something that you'll just need to look at, "What would be a good rate for your particular organization?" You may or may not need all of the different assets that are available. Some organizations do not want to offer all of these. Some of them just might want to focus on a home purchase or--on education. We were wanting to offer all three to our clients. Sarah Jane, would you like to--to come in on the Promise Zones and—alright.

Sarah Jane: Hi everyone. My name is Sarah Jane and I'm the Promise Zones Coordinator for Choctaw Nations and I'm also a CAB recipient as well. So I've—I've been a product of this program in addition to getting to work on the Promise Zones. So it's a kind of what the Promise Zones is and is a connection among all different parts of the federal government. And Dawn and Robin talked about we have a lot of partnerships through it locally and these

partnerships are the reason we were chosen as a Promise Zones. And we've already made a huge impact into the lives of tribal members and all who lived here and that--that success and our potential for even more. That was--that was the main reason we are chosen as a Promise Zones and because of the strong relationships and an impact to make a positive change. The Promise Zones is--is handled a little bit differently by every single federal agency. So we're really excited to see that AFI is including Promise Zones preference into this grant, and its grant like this that help carry out the mission and the vision of Promise Zones by impairing our communities and our tribal members and to have a better quality of life.

And I think this program particular is so important because it help train our young people and then help retain them in Southeastern Oklahoma as well. So not only are we educating people, we're keeping them here, and through starting their own businesses and purchasing homes which--will just lead to a better economy and--and features for the whole area. And like I said, the Promise Zones is a little bit different from every --among every agency but helping human services has been a great job in implementing Promise Zones preference through the all their grant programs. One of our first kind of big Promise Zones success story is to the early head start grant from HHS and that was a \$15,000,000 grant awarded to Choctaw Nation for a period of five years and this just came out in March of this year. And it's not just coming to Choctaw Nation. It's actually going to Choctaw Nation as well as our partners with local day care providers and head starts around the nation.

So this opens up lines of access for early childhood education and childcare. Many people have to drive 30 or 40 miles or even more and to have adequate childcare for their--for their youth and so this would be a wonderful partnership that's coming through the nation that has an impact. I think they had--I think 80 similar and different and childcare providers and arrow in head starts on board for that program. So--so I just wanna say thank you to HHS and thank you for recognizing these partnerships and helping fits in--fits in many behind it to really empower--empower our youth and empower our people. So I'm really excited to see what's becoming next from AFI and there's a potential it had. I was--I think, part of the first grant. I think I started three or four years ago.

It was a great way to kinda transition. I was a graduate student and didn't make any money. I think I had a negative income at that time. And so this was a great way for me to move back home after I finish my education, I get my feet back on the ground you know. Actually, we ended ranching with my family. So my dad and I now have 35 baby--baby calves on the ground for the spring and--and I should have--I should have emailed you all a picture and--and this program really does change lives and it helps empower our people and--and it's a really wonderful program for Indian country and beyond, and has a chance to help people stay where they--stay where they are and to--to empower their lives and contribute to the economy and contribute to the community. So that was Promise Zones is all about and I'm excited to see how this falls apart of it.

Dawn?: The next slide has my contact information on there just in case anyone wants to—to reach out and I'll be happy to direct you to Robin or to Sarah Jane. Thank you!

Emily: Thank you so much guys. That was great! I love—I love hearing about the businesses that—that AFI IDA savers start and definitely a cattle—you know a cattle business is not—not one that I hear about very often you know. We—we just because I would actually say that the majority of AFI product actually happen in urban or suburban areas and they're actually less common in rural areas like Choctaw just because of the amount of resources that are available. So I definitely applaud the nation in making the commitment to bringing together the resources that were necessary to sustain this program. I wanted to hear from Dawn about what—what are the sources of non-federal—for the non-federal cash contribution for you AFI projects?

Dawn: We are fully funded by tribal funds.

Emily: Tribal funds, okay. Yeah, so that you know—so that's great! So that's you know the tribe is making that investment in you know higher education and home purchase and—and—and the business capitalization because they see it as an economic development driver and a way to retain people in the community you can tell. So you know anybody who's not in a Native American community you can think of the equivalent will be your local you know county or—or state government providing the non-federal cash match because obviously theirs are non-federal sources and so if they want to make the investment in economic development that would be a way to do it.

Another point that I wanna make about the Choctaw program is that they have an amazingly sophisticated project you know. They talked about using Vista Share Outcome Tracker that's a customizable off the shelf software platform you know. I was—literally, was just on the phone with somebody who—who tracked their deposits and—and withdrawals in an Excel spreadsheet. You know it—it depends on the sophistication of your project and how long it's been around you know. This--the Choctaw's AFI IDA program has been around for a long time. So you know they clearly they have their systems down to a tea but that doesn't mean that you have to be there, a 100% there for your first grant. And I'm sure this is something capacity that they have built up over time.

So thank you guys again so much for sharing—for sharing the story of what it looks like and--and how it ties into the Promise Zones there. So I want to talk a little bit more now about Assets for Independence the funding opportunity announcement. And if you think you want to apply for AFI funding for your area and start a project, what could that look like? So first, I wanna go over some of the key AFI requirements that you should be aware of when you're deciding is it a good fit for your organization and I've gone over—I've referenced a lot of these a couple of times but I wanna you know fill them out clearly. So the person's a cost sharing is the 100% cash match from non-federal sources and that's a big stumbling block for a lot of new applicants is where to find that non-federal cash match from. We talked about states and local and county funding but there's also a lot of funding from financial institutions and foundations, and

leveraging existing financial assistance programs like college scholarship. There's a lot of different ways to go with this and I'm--we're happy to work with you more at the AFI Resource Center to help you think through what are the options in your community.

There are specific ways that the funds—project funds have to be used. Basically, you know you're gonna put your federal and your non-federal match together in a pot into an account and then it's your project fund and 85% of those project funds have to be used to match participants IDA savings. So they are—there's some sort of like a pass through that goes—that gets paid out on behalf of the individual and that means the 15% can be used for staffing and operating and data collection, and there are actually specific percentages that need to go to each of those purposes that I can—that is filled out in a funding opportunity announcement. AFI IDA's can only be used for specific qualified expenses first home meaning you have and owned the home in the past three years, capitalizing a business, you have to write a business plan, or post-secondary education or training that is from an eligible educational institution which is either an educational institution that is accredited by the US Department of Education or that qualifies under the Perkins Act.

So it can be you know a formal two year or four year program or it can be something shorter like a certificates or even remedial classes can be allowable if they're coming from an education—eligible educational institution. And then in terms of operating your AFI project there are some specific requirements related to administration of the project, the savings period where we mentioned you have to--they have to save for at least six months. There's a match cap on how much match each individual can receive and that's \$2,000 of the federal and two—and therefore 2,000 ends up--goes into the non-federal so it's kind of essentially \$4,000 per person if you're just—if you're just doing a straight one-to-one non-federal cash match. Obviously, Choctaw talked about bringing additional non-federal resources to the table so they were able to offer an even higher match on a rate to their savers and that's awesome when you can do it.

And then of course, there are all the other sources of financial assistance that you're helping layer in. There's another requirement is that you partner with a financial institution to hold your projects reserve account that's role your match funding is sitting and then the IDAs, Individual Development Account 'cause they're real savings program. Your—your savers are gonna start—are gonna start real savings account and they're gonna develop a relationship with a financial institution through this IDA program. And so that's kind of you know going back to the non-federal, that's part of the reason why so many financial institutions fund the IDA program because it's a—honestly, a great source for them of new people to hear--to get connected to their bank or credit union particularly you know we're working with a lot of folks who were unbanked or under-banked. So this is you know--you're kind of as the grantee you're providing a conduit to them to access safe financial services and you know but it's incentivize with the matching funds. And so that's clearly a value to the financial institution

and you would want to—want them to financially support your project to take advantage of that, to leverage that.

So when you're thinking about the fit for your organization it's about you know do you have any experience in administering AFI projects or similar you know large scale professionally federal programs, things that are focused--projects that are focused on first time home ownership, education, or a business that would be--then this would be a really good fit. We think it's often very strong to layer an IDA on top of existing services that already kinda pushing people in this direction. So like the Choctaw Nation talked about how it builds on their career services. That makes a lot of sense. You wanna think about your capacity and resources for the project. So the capacity can be within your own organization but also include your partners in the area and I know that that's what the Promise Zones is all about is activating those community partnerships.

And then when you think about resources available for the project, obviously that's thinking about the non-federal cash contribution bill so about staff time. Particularly, again, when you're leveraging existing programs that are working to get people into homes, into education, and in the small businesses that's some degree of case management that you can leverage that then it's not a matter of talking to people about their IDA—you know starting up a phone call just to talk about an IDA. You're checking one with them about a host of different things and one of the pieces, one of the topics of your conversation is “Oh by the way, did you make your IDA deposit? Are you ready to do a mass withdrawal?” So really it's—you really wanna think about how you're layering it with other available resources and capacity.

So another—another point that I wanna make kind of to that degree is you know you all are part of networks within your community and so if you think this is a good idea that would be of demand for your—for citizens in your—in your area but you don't think you're up to managing the projects. Maybe it's just not the right time or maybe you're not a—you're too new of a non-profit. Think about who else in your—in your community, in your network of partners might be the right applicant. And I encourage you to share my information and this information that you get today with them and—and—and try to talk with them about the value that you see an IDA could bring to your community.

And then when you're thinking about the fit with your service area and your target population, you wanna think about how—what percentage of your clients would likely be eligible but then also think about their demand for asset purchases. You know if they—if you have you know amazing—amazing scholarships available and--and that cover a 100% of people tuition and books and fees and computer and all that, and maybe you don't need education IDAs. So really, it's worth doing some investigation about what is the demand is gonna be and do people have the basics stability to save in an IDA. You know people need to have a study you know probably need to have study, housing, and study incomes, and their employment in order to really be successful you know for this savings period.

And then you wanna think about asset purchases like is there—if you're gonna do homeownership, is there affordable housing in your area that's available for home purchase, that kind of thing. So if you think that this is something that would fit with your community and with your organization or with a partner's organization, I will encourage you to check out the funding opportunity announcement that was released. You can access it through this link here or through—or through the AFI Resource Center website. And there's the--the shorter link shown there. And I'm gonna go ahead and send out this presentation in PDF to—or a link to where this is, I think ,after the presentation.

So the next application due date is just around the corner. It's on June 15<sup>th</sup>. But then we have also—or OCS has also went down funding due dates in October 2015 and April 2016 but of course I mean that's spending on federal funds availability but like I said we've been around since 1999 so we have high hopes for that to continue and the dates have been announced so if you're—don't think you can put something together in a month. Maybe start thinking about towards an October application and we can support that. Who is eligible? It's—to apply for AFI, it's non-profit with the 501 C3 status, state local or government agencies or tribal governments applying jointly with a 501 C3, financial institutions such as low-income credit unions or community development financial institutions that have a collaboration. Those are the—the types of organizations that are eligible to apply.

In terms of the awards, you can apply from anywhere to \$10,000 to \$1,000,000. It's a five-year project period meaning you have five years to spend those funds. The full funding is available upon award. You have to—you know you deposit your non-federal cash and then the next day you can draw down on your AFI—your federal AFI funds. In 2014, there was approximately \$10,000,000 that was awarded as grant to about 44 organizations. We definitely have some applicants and some awards that were a \$1,000,000 and we definitely have some that were small as like \$25,000. I will say the majority of them were under a \$100,000. It's definitely okay to start small. Get your feet—you know get your feet wet, do a proof of concept, and then go back to funders to grow your project even more as you get the things worked out.

So if you think this would be a good fit for your organization, the next steps I would say would be to share information with leadership partners and staff to contact the AFI Resource Center for a copy of the AFI application and to join the mailing list. The mailing list just means that we will send you a black email every couple of weeks about new resources that we have and reminding you about the funding deadlines and check out some of our other perspective grantee webinars. We just posted one that was an introduction to the 2015 funding opportunity announcement and that really is walking through and explaining the sections of the funding opportunity announcement because that can be a complex document. We're gonna offer a live webinar on May 27<sup>th</sup> about Developing Resources and Partners specifically funding partners. [chuckle] And then we're gonna be developing something soon about the mechanics of preparing and submitting an AFI application.

So if you're on our mailing list you'll get notified when that gets posted through our website. And here is the address for our website. It's [idaresources.acf.hhs.gov](http://idaresources.acf.hhs.gov). That's the website for the AFI Resource Center and we provide technical assistance to AFI grantees and to new applicants. So actually somebody submitted a question asking if there was—if there was currently an AFI program in their state. And so that's—I waited until now 'cause there's this link for the grantee locator. You can select your state and figure out if there are other grantees in your area. What I'd say though is though that even if there is a grantee operating in your state or city that does not make it—that does not make you ineligible to apply for AFI. We definitely have multiple AFI grantees working in the same geographic area because you know each program is only gonna serve so many people and maybe your project will focus on small business and the existing project focuses on home ownership.

So it's not seen as a conflict because you're gonna—you're probably gonna read the different network and set of people. So you know once you've—so again, how you would take the next steps would be to send an email to [info@idaresources.org](mailto:info@idaresources.org) or give a call to our help desk at 8667786037 and request a copy of that AFI application kit and that includes to fill out the funding opportunity announcement as well as some other details about applying about the actual mechanics of the application. And of course, you know this help—this help desk is—is staffed normal business hours on the east coast and we're here to answer your questions about—about putting together an application.

So that is the last slide in my—in my slide deck and I—I thanked so much for Dawn and her colleagues for their presentation. And I wanna offer to take some questions from people if you wanna go ahead and typing your questions into the chat box. We can see what we can answer for you. [pause]

Okay, one question I got was—was from somebody who says that they're not actually a Promise Zones designee but can they still apply? And the answer is definitely yes. We—we're just trying to get the word out to as many different places as possible and—and—but—and agriculture offered to put on this webinar but—but really the eligibility is broader than just Promise Zones designees. It is really any group that fits within this—what I'm showing on the slide here, non-profit with the 501 C3 status, state local tribal government or financial institutions or to grandfathered organizations. So yes, if you can—if you are—or can partner with a Promise Zones, you get some bonus points in the application but actually there are other ways to earn bonus points as well through partnering with—with the specific organizations that serves population of interest to ACF such as opportunity used or survivors of domestic violence, etcetera, etcetera, and this is all in the funding opportunity announcement or if you serve an area that is unserved by a current AFI grantee, the states of Wyoming and Rhode Island and then the territories. And so you can get bonus points that way as well.

So someone has asked how strict are the non-federal components of the cash contribution, are there any federal funds that can pass the different entities that maybe used? And—and yeah,

your—so there—there is—the—the way that it's written into the funding opportunity announcement is that any federal funds where it's written to their statutory authority that it can be used as the non-federal match for a cost sharing requirements then it's allowable. And so the—the most common example we see right now is Community Development Block Grant. So when—when the block grant's funds are given to a state or a county or a city, the state or county or city can use them as the non-federal cash match for an AFI project because they—they've been—because it's in the CDBG statute that it's allow—that it can be used as a non-federal cash contribution. So if you have a thought about other sources of—of federal funds that maybe could be use, I would say check out their statute and call the relevant program manager. [chuckle] And see if they can maybe help you figure those out.

So we have another question here about are there restrictions on the population to be addressed that would eliminate addressing the specific targeted needs of newly released county jail inmates? No, if they are eligible for the project—for the AFI project otherwise that seems like it would be a great population that would be in need of assistance. So there is—there are no—there is no—nothing ruling out people with a criminal record and there's also nothing ruling out non-citizens. The—the—the—you know the consigning factors on that that we see is actually more on the financial institution side what do they need in order to set up the individual development accounts within their system. So you would just—if you're gonna work with one of those populations you would need to make sure that you're working with a financial institution that—that is—that is able to work with them as well. Yeah, that's last question.

Alright, well that seems—that's the last question that I have received in the Q&A box so giving people couple more seconds to—to type in questions. And otherwise we will go ahead and wrap this up or flip--flip the slide back to the AFI Resource Center contact information. If you think of questions as you read through the funding opportunity announcement or you know as you're talking about this with your—with your partners so please go ahead and—and give us a call or send us an email with any questions. So thanks so much to all our--my co-presenters and co-hosts for getting this out there and I hope to be hearing from a lot of you in the coming months about...