

FO Call Minutes 1-8-09

Attending Call: Itzel Spehar, Lonnie James, Brenda Lewis, Rebekah Barger, Thomas Jensen, Maggie Reilly, Letty Duran, Shawn Winkler-Rios, Deanne Goforth, Kenny LaPoint, Corky Senecal, Sarah Castagnola, Joy Hunt, Cynthia Winter

Check In:

- MCNW – has been busy in January with folks getting back into the swing of things after the holidays. MCNW has been doing a number of disbursements this month and has 60 people on their waiting list.
- NeighborImpact – has filled all of their available slots.
- PHC – is not accepting additional applications at this time. They have 10-12 people on their waiting list.
- WSCAT – just received their first deposit statement today! They are working on recruiting partners to assist with outreach and referrals.
- UCDC – is using the quiet time to refine their policies and procedures and have started enrollment for their 3A Youth Program. They also have a waiting list of participants.
- eDev – Lane Micro Business changed their name to Entrepreneurial Development Services to better reflect their mission and geographic coverage. Their IDA program is humming along. 2008 was spent on capacity building. They are happy about how they ended the year. They have questions about how the economy will affect micro enterprise businesses and IDA participants in 2009, and they want NPF to take the lead in thinking about how the economic down turn will impact the IDA program more generally. Cynthia suggested further conversation about this issue at the February 6th Visioning Retreat. Thomas suggested unified messaging to program stakeholders that this is not an expansion year.
- NAYA – is hiring two new positions for their IDA program. An Admin Assistant and a Life Skills/Post Secondary Education Coach to assist participants in entering higher education. The majority of their participants are nontraditional students. Ben and CJ will attend ONABN's course in the spring and then teach it at NAYA in the fall. Ben continues to give financial literacy classes at lunch for the staff of other Native American organizations.
- NPF – Per Brian Stewart's email and phone calls, WaMu (JP Morgan Chase) will no longer be opening new IDA accounts.

Tax Credit Update

Cynthia explained that tax credit sales were down this year due to the economy. Many of our 2007 high wealth donors gave little or none in 2008, and there were fewer stock contributions. The good news is that we received many more small contributions – most likely from individuals that were motivated to give because of the program versus the tax benefits. This will help us build a base that could stay with us in good economic times and bad.

Sold: \$4,554,702

RFA Requests: \$9,855,590

Difference: \$5,260,888

The timing of the February 6th IDA Vision Retreat will allow us to think through where we want to see the Initiative go and how/what/where we prioritize.

Shawn commented that Feb 6th is a month out and asked if we can afford to wait that long. Cynthia explained that she would be meeting with Executive Directors in the next three weeks to get their ideas, suggestions, and input in advance of meeting with Victor Merced at the end of the month. That said, it is evident that FOs will not be getting all of the funds they requested in their applications, and there is no reason to wait until the retreat to start thinking about how to readjust your IDA program based on the reduced number of dollars available. Cynthia also noted that it's probably safe to assume the current economic strain will continue throughout much of 2009, and may also impact funding in 2010.

Training Updates

Outcome Tracker Webinars

1. An intermediate training on Reports and Queries will be scheduled for February. Martin from VistaShare will give the training and is working an agenda now based on the Outcome Tracker training needs FO's email to Joy as well as concerns expressed in site visits.
2. A training on uploading bank statements and tracking project funds will be scheduled in March

Joy will send out a Meeting Wizard to help schedule the trainings, and will circulate an agenda in advance of the trainings so that FO's can give additional feedback on the topics to be covered. It is recommended that FO's attend both trainings to assist in getting familiar with the capabilities of OT, however attendance is not required.

"Best Practice" Sharing

In the training survey, some respondents replied that they would like to have time to share and learn best practices from each other. Joy floated this idea to the group. NAYA and PHC thought it would be a good idea. PHC is looking for ideas on running meetings for program graduates. One idea is to add an hour at the end of FO meetings. **ACTION:** NPF will consider how best to move forward as there were not strong feelings one way or another. One topic was suggested.

Using IDA Funds to Purchase Habitat Homes

Questions have arisen regarding using IDA funds to assist with the down payment of Habitat homes especially in areas where more than one FOs is providing homeownership IDAs. PHC has been approached by Portland HFH to work with their homeowners and NeighborImpact has worked with the Bend affiliate in the past due to limited homeownership options in Central Oregon. Umpqua had a participant in the savings process that was then approved for a Habitat home and accepted into the program. Their HFH affiliate only builds one or two homes a year.

Cynthia's opinion was that HFH just recently started asking for down payments from homeowners as land/material costs started to rise in the past few years. The down payments became a way of making up operating costs to Habitat. In essence, the IDA funds are going to sponsor Habitat homes and assist HFH more than assisting the homeowner in lowering their mortgage costs.

Thomas asked if this was the same for Self Help housing. Brenda explained that IDAs were often needed to help folks qualify for Self Help homes because they still needed to qualify for a loan. Everyone acknowledged that IDA funds alone cannot get someone into a home. All homeownership purchases require an assortment of additional mortgage products to make them pencil out for low income individuals. The question is – when funds are scarce and affordable homes are more available should we be sponsoring Habitat homes with IDA tax credits? According to NeighborImpact, there is no longer as strong a need to partner with HFH in Central Oregon as the economy has opened up other options for affordable homes in the area. **ACTION:** Make a decision on this subject at the end of the next FO meeting when everyone that will be affected is in the room together.

Developing a Screening Process to Identify Individuals with Multiple IDAs

On more than one occasion an employee that has previously worked at one FO and now works at a different FO has recognized the name of an IDA participant from their past. The question came up as to how we prevent participants from having multiple IDAs at the same time. Cynthia pointed out that the statute allows for individuals to have multiple IDAs (not at the same time), but individuals cannot receive more than \$20,000 in IDA matching funds. FO's can be more restrictive than the statute but not less restrictive.

ACTION

1. Joy will check and see if OT can flag an account if the SS# has already been entered in OT.
2. Recently all of the FOs added the Question "Are you enrolled in an IDA program at another organization?" to their applications. In nine months, NPF will run a report in OT to see if

any duplicate social security numbers show up in “Opened” accounts. If not, we will assume that the Application question is catching folks and not be concerned about the issue until we are informed otherwise.

POST MEETING FOLLOW UP

Tim reported that flagging duplicate accounts will violate participant confidentiality (because one FO shouldn't have access to another FO's client records). However, Martin designed a new report to help identify duplicate records based on name, social security number, and birthday. Joy will begin running that report once a month and will follow up with FO's individually as needed.

Updates on Pulling of Credit Reports

- NAYA – American Reporting Company recently raised their prices from \$10 to \$19.95. They are looking at First American CredCo to get a price comparison.
- eDev – They are working with Vikki Frank at Credit Builders Alliance. They just received their password from TransUnion to get started.
- CASA – Waiting for their site visit from TransUnion.
- WSCAT – Midstream in getting set up; trying to find alternatives to scheduling a site visit. They are using First American CredCo for soft pulls.
- NeighborImpact – Pulling single reports. Equifax cost rose 30%. Looking to use Experian or TransUnion.
- MCNW – Using Experian.
- UCDC, PHC continue to pull tri-merge reports

February FO Call

The call will include an update from PSU on the evaluation and surveys. The majority of the call will focus on the Microenterprise Purchase Recommendations. This will be a preliminary conversation on the topic. **ACTION:** Joy will send out a draft proposal and an agenda at least one week prior to the call.

IDA Vision Retreat

- February 6th at Pringle Hall, 606 SE Church Street, Salem, OR 97301
- Retreat will focus on program “visioning,” legislative involvement, and governance.
- FO's as well as NPF and OHCS staff will attend.

Cynthia will get an agenda out one week prior to the retreat after the interviews with the EDs take place later this month. Until that time she asked that everyone block out the full day to attend this session. FOs are expected to attend this important session.