



**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Public and Indian Housing**

SPECIAL ATTENTION OF:

Public Housing Agency Directors
Public Housing Hub Office Directors
Public Housing Field Office Directors
Resident Management Corporations
All Multifamily Hub Directors
All Multifamily Program Center Directors

NOTICE PIH 2014-26 (HA)

Issued: October 21, 2014

This notice remains in effect until amended, superseded, or rescinded

Subject: Asset Building and Financial Literacy Resources

Purpose: This Notice outlines guidance to inform public housing agencies (PHAs) and other housing providers about financial literacy tools and resources available to help HUD-assisted families enhance their financial literacy and asset building skills. The purpose of this Notice is to enhance low-income resident access to these resources and enable them to progress toward financial independence.

Background: In accordance with Section 2 and 33 of the U.S. Housing Act, HUD is charged with promoting the development of local strategies to coordinate how the public housing and housing choice voucher programs are used to assist with targeting public and private resources to enable eligible families to achieve economic independence and self-sufficiency.

Asset Building and financial literacy resources are identified in this Notice to provide recipients of Federally-assisted housing greater access to enhance their abilities, based on knowledge, skills, and access to educational and training resources and capital, and to manage financial resources more effectively. Listed below are a variety of federal resources available to build the financial literacy and asset-building skills of low-income households. Asset Building strategies include financial education and coaching, building and repairing credit, accessing earned income tax credits, improving access to safe, affordable financial service or investment products, and promoting savings and asset building. While the primary mission of public housing agencies (PHAs) and private owners of HUD-assisted housing is to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing to low-income households, these housing providers constitute a nationwide network for the delivery of housing assistance and self-sufficiency resources to HUD-assisted households.

HUD is a member of the federal **Financial Literacy and Education Commission (FLEC)**, which was established under the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003. FLEC is composed of

22 federal agencies, chaired by the Secretary of the Treasury and vice-chaired by the Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). Additional information about FLEC activities is available at <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/financial-education/Pages/commission-index.aspx>.

Participation: HUD encourages but does not require PHAs and private owners of HUD-assisted housing to make the information contained in this Notice available to HUD-assisted households. For example, information about resources could be included in newsletters, distributed with monthly rent requests, and provided during recertification. Access to online resources, such as the web pages described below, could be provided in Neighborhood Network centers or computer labs, where they exist. PHAs and private owners may also be in a position to provide space for [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance](#) programs, or transportation to such programs. Other programs that may be ideally suited to implement the information in this notice include Family Self-Sufficiency, ROSS, HOPE VI CSS and Choice Neighborhoods “People” component. Running one of these programs is not a pre-requisite to employing the information in this notice, but these programs will already have Service Coordination in place and will be prepared to engage.

Program Information: HUD is publishing this Notice to facilitate the distribution of information about financial management and asset building resources. Information about asset building and financial literacy is available on HUD’s Web site at: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/hope6/css/resources#6

The following are several federal resources related to asset building and/or financial management skills that can help the consumers and families you serve:

- **Financial Literacy and Education Commission**
[MyMoney.gov](#), is a national financial education web site, through which many resources are available. MyMoney.gov contains information on financial topics from more than 20 federal agencies, organized around the MyMoney Five building blocks for managing and growing money. Information is also available on key life events, like buying a home or having a baby. MyMoney Quizzes can direct users to the information they need most.
- **FDIC’s MoneySmart Program**
<http://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/index.html>
Money Smart is a comprehensive financial education curriculum designed to help low and moderate-income individuals outside the financial mainstream enhance their financial management and investment skills and create positive banking relationships. Money Smart has reached over 2.75 million consumers since 2001. Research shows that the curriculum can positively influence how consumers manage their finances, and these changes are sustainable in the months after the training.
- **FDIC’s Money Smart for Older Adults**
<http://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/olderadult.html>
MoneySmart for Older Adults (MSOA) is an instructor-led training program developed jointly by FDIC and CFPB. The module provides awareness among older adults and their caregivers on how to prevent elder financial exploitation and to encourage advance planning and informed financial decision-making.

- The **Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)** has developed several important tools to help consumers increase their financial knowledge and skills. These tools help protect consumers from deceptive and abusive financial practices by informing them about their rights and providing them with federal resources to help address violations that are taking place in the financial marketplace. These tools allow PHAs, housing providers, community organizations and others to exchange information, research, and promising practices to help increase self-sufficiency among their customers.
 - **CFPB's Office of Consumer Response** handles consumers' complaints about a variety of consumer financial services and products. The CFPB forwards complaints to the appropriate company, works to get consumers a response to their issue, and provides consumers with status updates throughout the complaint process. Submitting a complaint and tracking its status is simple and secure. The fastest way for a consumer to get started is to go to www.consumerfinance.gov/Complaint. If a consumer needs help while online, they can chat with one of CFPB's team members on the site. They can also submit a complaint over the phone by calling the CFPB at **(855) 411-CFPB (2372)** toll free. CFPB's U.S. based call centers can help in over 180 languages, and can also take calls from consumers who are hearing impaired, have hearing loss, or have speech disabilities. The TTY/TDD number is: (855) 729-2372. Learn more about submitting a complaint: www.consumerfinance.gov/Complaint.
 - **Ask CFPB** is an interactive online tool that gives consumers clear, unbiased answers to common consumer financial questions. Ask CFPB contains over 1,000 easy-to-read, plain-language entries written by the Bureau's subject-matter experts. Ask CFPB provides definitions that translate highly technical industry jargon to help consumers better understand financial products and services. Ask CFPB is available in English (<http://www.consumerfinance.gov/askcfpb/>) and Spanish (<http://www.consumerfinance.gov/es/>).
 - **CFPB's Office of Financial Empowerment** works to empower low-income and economically vulnerable consumers to become financially capable and measurably improve their financial lives. *Your Money, Your Goals*, is a toolkit developed by the Office of Financial Empowerment that organizations serving low-income consumers can use to help their clients set goals, choose financial products and build skills in managing money, credit, and debt. The full toolkit is available at: <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/your-money-your-goals/>
 - **CFPB's Office of Financial Protection for Older Americans** is dedicated to the financial well-being of older Americans. It works to ensure that seniors have the information they need to make sound financial decisions and help seniors, their family members, caregivers and the professionals who assist them to identify and avoid unfair, deceptive, abusive and discriminatory practices that target older Americans.

Learn how to prevent elder financial exploitation using the Money Smart for Older Adults – Prevent Financial Exploitation curriculum. Produced in partnership with the FDIC, consumers can download the resource guide at: http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201306_cfpb_msoa-participant-guide.pdf; view

their website for more information: <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/older-americans/>

- **CFPB Managing Someone Else's Money guides**
<http://www.consumerfinance.gov/blog/managing-someone-elses-money/>

The Office for Older Americans produced four Managing Someone Else's Money guides to assist people who are managing money or property for a family member or friend who is unable to pay bills or make financial decisions. Individuals responsible for handling the money of others include: agents under powers of attorney, court-appointed guardians of property and conservators, trustees, and government benefit fiduciaries (Social Security representative payees and Veterans Administration fiduciaries). The guides explain the duties and responsibilities of people acting in each of these fiduciary roles; how to watch out for scams and financial exploitation; what to do if a loved one is a victim; and where to go for help. The guides are available for download from the Bureau's website.

- The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the **Department of Health and Human Services** supports the economic mobility of families through asset building and financial education.
 - The **Assets for Independence (AFI) program** is an asset-building program for low-income individuals and families administered by the Office of Community Services in ACF. AFI is authorized to award grants to three categories of entities: 1) non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) status; 2) state, local, and tribal government agencies (must apply jointly with a 501(c)(3) non-profit); and 3) financial institutions that are designated as low-income credit unions or community development financial institutions. AFI grantees run projects in which low-income individuals save earned income in special-purpose, matched savings accounts called Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). These individuals use their IDA savings, combined with federal and non-federal matching funds, to achieve any of three objectives: acquiring a first home; capitalizing a small business; or enrolling in postsecondary education or training. More information about the AFI program is available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/programs/afi>.
 - The **AFI Resource Center** (<http://idaresources.acf.hhs.gov/>) houses resources on financial capability strategies such as financial education and asset building that can be used by any interested organization. The Resource Center also has information for organizations interested in applying for an AFI grant. In addition to the web site, the Resource Center can be contacted by phone at (866) 778-6037 or by email at info@idaresources.org.
 - AFI grantees are often looking for partners that can help them successfully recruit and enroll eligible participants and provide other services that support participant success. PHAs interested in partnering with an AFI grantee can find out if there is one in their community by visiting <http://idaresources.acf.hhs.gov/afigrantees>.

- Additionally, many **non-governmental organizations** provide financial management and asset-building resources.
 - The **Credit Builders Alliance**, which offers a toolkit and other programs intended to help low-income families build and/or repair their credit. Information about these resources is available at <http://www.creditbuildersalliance.org/>.
 - Another non-governmental organization that provides resources that can help the consumers and families you serve is the **Corporation for Enterprise Development** (<http://cfed.org/>), a national nonprofit 501(c)3 organization that empowers low-and moderate-income households to build and preserve assets.
 - **The Pension Rights Center** offers information on pension counseling and retirement planning. <http://www.pensionrights.org/what-we-do/history/national-pension-assistance-resource-center>. Since 1993, Pension Counseling projects have helped older adults access information about their retirement benefits and negotiate with former employers and pension plan administrators for due compensation. Monetary recoveries have helped people achieve and maintain financial security, which has increased their independence and decision making.
 - **Money Management International** offers 30 steps to financial wellness: <http://www.moneymanagement.org/default.asp?RCTAG=FLM>

In summary, HUD encourages public housing agencies to work with their community partners and residents to improve their economic independence and increase self-sufficiency. The resources contained in this Notice provide an excellent starting point.

For questions on this program or any of the materials posted here, please contact Sandra Norcom at Sandra.Norcom@hud.gov or call 202-402-4644.

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Jemine A. Bryon, Acting Assistant Secretary
for Public and Indian Housing