



## **Data Reporting**

*New Grantee Orientation Webinar Series*

**December 14, 2016**

Stephanie: Hello everyone, and thank you for joining today's webinar on data and reporting. This is the fourth and final webinar of a four-part series designed to provide AFI grantees with key information. For this webinar today, we'll be led by Santiago Sueiro, a program associate at CFED, and myself, Stephanie Landry, a program manager at CFED. We also have Heidi, associate at ICF International joining us today to answer any questions that you have about reporting requirements.

So before we get started, I'd like to go over a few housekeeping items. You have the choice of dialing in with your phone or listening to the webinar through your computer. Select the appropriate audio option on the GoToWebinar control panel. You can ask a question at any time by using the chat box on your GoToWebinar control panel. And if you are watching this live and experience any technical difficulties, please type a question into the GoToWebinar interface or email us at [slandry@cfed.org](mailto:slandry@cfed.org) and we will help you troubleshoot them. Please keep in mind that this webinar is being recorded. We've muted all attendees to insure sound quality, so if you have any questions or issues, please type them into the query box. We'll make a recording and transcript of this presentation available on the AFI Resource Center website, the address of which is on your screen, at a later date. This webinar will last approximately 90 minutes, with time for questions and answers at the end. Feel free to type in your questions using the box at any time.

Alright, so let's get started. The primary objectives of this webinar are to become familiar with the AFI project reporting, including the AFI Performance Progress Report, or AFI PPR, and the Federal Financial Report, or SF-425. We'll also discuss data collection, performance management, and benchmarking.

It is critical for every AFI grantee to understand the reporting requirements for each AFI project, so we're going to cover that first. For each AFI grant project you operate, you are required to submit two different reports regularly throughout your grant period, the AFI Performance Project Report, or AFI PPR, and the Federal Financial Report. The AFI PPR includes detailed project information submitted on an AFI-specific form, and is due four times each year and after closeout. The Federal Financial Report includes financial information submitted on a federal standard form, the SF-425. It is due twice each year and after closeout. Even if you have had no activity on your project, all of these reports must be submitted to be in compliance with your grant. We will provide an overview of both of these reports next. And to get us started, I'm going to turn things over to Santi.

Santiago: Thanks, Stephanie. The AFI PPR was approved and rolled out on August, 2016, so it's fairly new. The AFI PPR collects very specific data on each AFI project, including services you offer, demographics on IDA holders, and information on matched and unmatched withdrawals. Data submitted using the AFI PPR will be used for the annual AFI Report to Congress, and to inform training and technical assistance for AFI grantees. The AFI PPR replaced two reports that AFI grantees previously submitted: the semiannual standard form performance progress report, or SF-PPR, and the annual data report, last collected in late 2014. The AFI PPR is submitted through the online data collection or OLDC system.

The AFI PPR has two different forms, the short form and the long form. The short form AFI PPR is due three times each year, using the standard federal due dates 30 days after the end of the quarter. For grants awarded at the end of September, the quarter one short form will be the first AFI PPR submitted. The long form AFI PPR is due annually at the end of November, and is also required as a final report 90 days after the project ends.

The AFI PPR short form consists of a cover page and select questions from the long form. This slide lists all ten questions, which I will run through quickly. First, the total number of AFI IDAs opened. Two, the current total number of AFI IDAs opened. Three, the total amount of AFI IDA holder savings deposits in AFI IDAs. Four, the current total amount of AFI IDA holder savings balances in AFI IDAs. Five, total number of AFI IDA holders who made a matched withdrawal. Six, total amount of AFI IDA holder savings withdrawn from an AFI IDA for a matched withdrawal. Seven, total amount of federal AFI grant funds dispersed as matching funds for matched withdrawals. Eight, total amount of non-federal cash disbursed as matching funds for matched withdrawals. Nine, total number of AFI IDA holders who exited this project without a matched withdrawal. And last, total amount of AFI IDA holder savings withdrawn or reassigned due to project exit for any reason without a matched withdrawal. You can download a Word version of the short form from the AFI Resources website, so you can see all of the required data fields. When viewed in OLDC, the cover page of the AFI PPR short form is prepopulated with information from your notice of award.

Although the first AFI PPR **long form** for your grant may not be due until next November, it is critical for you to review the long form now so that you can make sure that you are collecting all the data you will need to report. There are approximately 170 fields in the long form, organized in several sections. On this slide, you can see the sections of the long form. Section A collects data on the project and its administration. Section B on the IDA design. Section C on AFI IDA holder account activity. Section D on the training, services, and assistance offered to AFI IDA holders. Section E on AFI IDA holder demographics at the time of enrollment, and Section F on AFI IDA holder demographics at the time of final matched withdrawal. Like the short form, a Word version of the long form can be downloaded from the AFI Resource website.

Because there were some changes to the data elements collected in the AFI PPR form prior to AFI PPR reports, some of the data fields are optional to provide existing grantees time to update their data collections. New grantees are strongly encouraged to start their project with data systems aligned to the AFI PPR and to collect and report all data fields from the beginning. This will provide the AFI office with better AFI program data and will help you get a strong start to your implementation.

As we mentioned earlier, the AFI PPR must be submitted to the online data collection or OLDC system. The OLDC is administered by the GrantSolutions Center of Excellence, but it's a different module than GrantSolutions and requires an additional account to be created. The AFI Resource Center is handling OLDC account creation and modifications for AFI grantees. Organizations that are brand new to AFI will be getting an email from the AFI Resource Center about setting up OLDC access later this month. Organizations that already have OLDC access and need to change their user or resolve other issues with OLDC should contact the AFI Resource Center help desk.

There are recorded webinars on the AFI Resource Center about using the OLDC and submitting AFI PPRs. So today we'll just highlight a few critical points. Errors and warnings are validation checks in the OLDC. Warnings will not prevent report submission. But double check the numbers and explain them in the narrative, if necessary. Errors will prevent report submission, so double check those numbers. If the error doesn't make sense, call the AFI Resource Center. It may be something that we need to change.

So as you're working on the report, particularly for the long form with its multiple sections, always save and validate along the way. Once you've completed all the sections, again save and validate at the report level on the report section screen. After a report form has been successfully saved and validated, and when you are ready to submit, your AFI PPR must be certified and then submitted. These are two separate steps. Each AFI PPR will be reviewed, and you may be asked to revise and resubmit your report if there seem to be reporting mistakes. Please don't hesitate to reach out to the AFI Resource Center with any questions or concerns about AFI PPR.

There are a lot of resources on the AFI Resource Center to help you complete and submit your AFI PPR, including recorded presentations, Word versions of the AFI PPR forms, and much more. The central location for these resources is the AFI PPR Overview page pictured here. And with that, I'll turn it back to Stephanie.

Stephanie: Thanks, Santi. So now we will discuss the Federal Financial Report, its purpose, and how it should be completed and submitted via GrantSolutions. This report is sometimes referred to as the FFR, but we will refer to it as the SF-425, which is the specific standard form required for AFI projects. The SF-425 is not tailored to the AFI program, but there are instructions to help AFI grantees understand how to complete the form. The AFI program fits into the standard form, which we will detail in the following slide.

All AFI grantees are required to provide updates on their financial progress by completing reports on the status of all federal and non-federal dollars. Similar to most of the data collected in the AFI PPR, SF-425 data is cumulative, with each new report collecting data from the beginning of your project period through the end of the most recent reporting period. The report describes the flow of funds for your AFI project, both the federal and the required non-federal match. You should not report on the SF-425 any information about other resources supporting the project, whether cash or in-kind. It is important to note that even if you have not drawn down any federal funds, you will still need to submit all SF-425s. The SF-425 is due twice a year, on April 30<sup>th</sup> for the report period ending March 31<sup>st</sup>, and on October 30<sup>th</sup> for the report period ending September 30<sup>th</sup>. Additionally a final SF-425 is due 90 days after the end of the project period.

In 2015, the OCS and the Office of Grants Management, OGM, developed instructions to clarify how the standard OMB SF-425 instructions apply to AFI grants. These instructions are available on the AFI Resource Center at the link provided here. A webinar recorded shortly after the instructions were released is also linked here. These are key resources for understanding how to complete the SF-425 accurately. Every AFI grantee should review them.

For AFI projects, the SF-425 is currently submitted online through GrantSolutions. As we described in our first webinar, you need to work with your grants management specialist to set up access to GrantSolutions. GrantSolutions is key, not only for submitting SF-425 reports, but also for getting important information about your grant award.

Here is a list of grants management specialists for AFI projects, also available on the AFI Resource Center website at the link provided. There have been some recent changes to these assignments, so existing grantees should check to see if their grants management specialist has changed.

In order to access the SF-425 in GrantSolutions, start from the My Grants List screen. Select the Reports menu dropdown, and then select the Federal Financial Report submenu. The system will generate a list of all active grants for which you have access. Click the dropdown arrow to the left of the grant program to view the entire list. The Federal Financial Report list provides a complete summary of past, current and future report periods. Each grant will display the key data columns, including report period, due date, type, status, workflow status, and action. For each reporting period, there will be a specific report

status, either due, past due, pending, or not reported. The workflow status will reflect the status in the report that has started the actual workflow approval cycle. Types of workflow status include not started, in progress, withdrawn, rejected, and accepted. Only grants management staff can use the rejected or accepted options.

As a best practice, grantees should review the last accepted report to confirm accuracy and note the cumulative amounts previously submitted. To view, click the View PDF link for the most recently accepted SF-425. Upon the confirmation of the prior SF-425, you can begin a new report. Typically, a report can be crafted and submitted when the report is in the due and past due states. Thus, a grantee can submit reports as long as the reporting period end date has passed. If a report has not been submitted by the required due date, the status will appear as past due. You can still craft and submit a past due report as long as it is submitted before the due date of the next reporting cycle. However, if the report is not submitted by the next reporting period end date, it will be marked as not reported, as you can see on your screen, and locked down. No further changes can be made to the SF-425 without access being allowed by your grants management specialist.

The process for submitting your SF-425 is the same for a due or past due report. From the summary screen, scroll down to the first reporting cycle, which allows you to start the report process. Click the Start link in the Action column to open the SF-425 electronic form. Once you have opened the SF-425 from, GrantSolutions will provide a simple prompt to confirm that you wish to proceed. Line items 1 through 9 will prepopulate for you. If any of those items have changed, such as your authorizing official, you need to amend your grant award. Contact both your grants management specialist and AFI program specialist immediately.

When you are satisfied with your report, scroll to the bottom of the screen and check the certification box. At this point, it is recommended you save the SF-425 by clicking the Save link. Should you need to update or edit the form, you can do so easily since it will remain in a work-in-progress state. Grantees should focus on submitting their SF-425 during the months of October and April. If you have been tracking your financial activity at least monthly, the report should not be difficult to complete on time.

And so now I will turn things back over to Santi.

Santiago: Alright. Thanks, Stephanie. So now that we've covered the reporting requirements, let's talk a little bit about how to collect that data and how to use that data to manage the performance of your AFI grant. Let's take a moment to think a little about getting all that information that underpins your project management. As many things, you need to know where you're going before you draw the map. In this case, first think about how you will use the data. In addition to managing your project, much of your data will go into your financial or performance progress reports. But you also want to use what you learn in real time, week to week, month to month, quarter to quarter. So you'll need to be able to see the trends over time.

How you use it determines, to a large extent, what you will collect. You must collect the data that you have to report, and you want to make sure that you're collecting the correct data to report at the correct time. So for example, the IDA holder demographics report in Section E of the AFI PPR must be collected at the time of enrollment. On the other hand, those in Section F are collected at the time of final matched withdrawal. In addition to the data for your reports, there are other things that you will likely want to know for your own project management.

So then you'll need to know who, likely more than one person, will collect the data. Different staff or partners will be better positioned to collect data. Much will be part of the eligibility process, but those responsible for your financial education, asset training and asset purchase processes and documentation will also be valuable resources. So next think about how the data will be collected, and with so many

types of data and likely several sources, how will you collect and store it? And last, you'll need processes and systems for managing project information.

There's no specific system that AFI grantees must use. The grantees use many methods for data management, including combinations of products. There are several resources on the AFI Resource Center. For example, Excel data tracking tool align to the AFI PPR, which can be downloaded from the link provided, and additional information to help you navigate data management.

For a project to be successful, merely collecting data is not sufficient. You need to study it and act on it. On this slide, you'll see the four R's of analyzing data. Review the data for project information. Reflect on what you see. Request additional information or clarification. And refine your conclusions. Be sure to ask your staff and IDA holders if your analysis and conclusions are sound. They might have additional perspectives. So then you'll need to act in response to what you learned. If your IDA holders are dropping out without making an asset purchase, what is your data telling you about why this is happening? And what can you do about it? Grantees must gather data to complete the reporting requirements. Performance management, which we'll talk about next, takes this a little further by analyzing and acting. Smart grantees will collect information, analyze it, and tweak it, tweak their projects all along to ensure that they reach their projected outcomes.

So let's talk about performance management. Performance management is a process that an organization or project can use to regularly view, review and assess their progress towards goals and objectives. Regular performance management helps organizations maximize program success and provides a check to make sure that you are on the right track towards the goals that your organization has set. A performance management system consists of a set of integrated performance goals, indicators and targets that is usually combined with an organization-wide reporting or tracking system. Though definitions of these may vary for your organization, the essential thing to remember is that you are tracking progress towards the overall purpose of your grant program.

There are many reasons that using a performance management system is a good idea. First, it will help your organization make better decisions and allocate resources where they are really needed. All levels of program support will be able to make data-driven decisions that they know are directly supported, supporting the program's goals. In addition, performance management enables decision makers to identify what works best and what training and technical assistance is needed. Further, utilizing a performance management system builds accountability right into your program. Using performance management allows you, the grantee, to achieve project goals. Performance management also allows you to state, at any time, where you are in terms of your project outcomes. You will have an accurate snapshot of what your project has achieved, like the number of asset purchases made or the amounts deposited by IDA holders. You will also know if you are or are not meeting your overall targets and goals. You will know how you are doing it, so you can keep doing it, or you will be able to begin to pin down why you might not be progressing toward completion as you had planned.

Of course, beyond these goals, indicators and targets, there are a lot of tasks, activities, service partners and other elements of project implementation. Here are a few common places to look to enhance progress. So for example, if you track referrals and marketing sources, you will be better able to understand the needs of your project's IDA holders and the characteristics and circumstances of IDA holders who complete, versus those who drop out. With this information, you can allocate your staff time and other resources to the appropriate services without wasted effort.

AFI projects have a kind of life cycle or flow. That flow is shown here with the key indicators that you can use to measure success. So let's start with the first one. Grantees deposit non-federal cash into the reserve fund and draw down equivalent federal funds before opening IDAs. Second, after you have

money in your reserve fund, you recruit eligible IDA holders and open IDAs. Next, your IDA holders will deposit their savings. After that, your IDA holders complete training specified by your project. And finally, they'll make their asset purchases using their IDA savings plus the federal and non-federal match. These figures and the data beneath them form the heart of your regular financial and progress reports to AFI and progress reports to other interested parties, like for example, your funders.

Of course, there are a lot of details in the work to achieve these indicators. But if you keep your eye on them and collect relevant data, you'll know whether you are on track to complete your project, or whether you need to make some changes in policies, partnerships or other areas. Without data, you may know if you are or are not succeeding with the aggregate numbers, but you won't know why, and the staff at AFI and the technical assistance team will find it harder to support your progress. So with that, I'll turn it back once more to Stephanie.

Stephanie: Great. Thanks, Santi. So we'd like to provide just an example and a tool to support these efforts. So in this example, we have highlighted some goals, indicators and targets. This terminology may differ across AFI or from grant program to program. Here, goals are where you want to be at the end of your project, indicators are the measures of progress towards your goals, and targets are quantitative benchmarks that add up to your goal over time. The goal in this example is for 75 IDA holders to save \$1,200 and make an asset purchase. To know your progress toward reaching your goal, it would be helpful to track the number of IDA holders opening IDAs, the amount they are saving, and the number of completed asset purchases. To stay on track in this example, you would need to open 15 new IDAs each quarter for five quarters, and your IDA holders would need to save \$50 per month for eight quarters.

The table you see on the screen is part of the Program Benchmarking Tool that can be found on the AFI Resources website. This tool can help grantees track their goals, indicators and targets. This table provides recommendations for establishing annual benchmarking targets that will put you on track to accomplish all five project milestones. These figures are cumulative totals, not the percentage you need to complete each year. For example, the table indicates that you should open 25 percent of participants' IDAs by the end of year one, and open 70 percent of participants' IDAs by the end of year two. So if you open 50 percent in year one, you need to open 20 percent more for a total of 70 percent to reach the benchmark by the end of year two. These benchmarks are only a guide. You can modify the amounts in the table to reflect your specific project.

The tool only gives annual benchmarks, but you can use it as a starting point to set quarterly or monthly targets. The important thing is that your targets need to be broken down into benchmarks over time, and you need to know whether you are hitting the benchmarks each time. If not, you'll need to adjust. And without useful data, you cannot know what to adjust.

To use the tool, you will enter the grant number and your award amount in the highlighted box that's shown above. The tool will automatically calculate the non-federal contribution amount, the maximum match amount per IDA holder, the target number of IDA holders, and your targeted number of asset purchases. The target percentages in the following table reflect the benchmarking recommendations included in the tool. You can modify these target percentages in Step 2 of the tool to reflect your specific project. The target months are calculated automatically using the target percentages in the table and the information you entered about your grant in Step 1. These benchmarks reflect the cumulative total that should be reached by the end of each year.

In the third step, you can enter the operation year of your grant and your actual figure. The tool will respond with a simple green, yellow or red highlight. It's a rough measure, but if you're in the red, or even in the yellow for an indicator, it would be time to look carefully at your data, your procedures, or your partners to see what needs to change. One thing we've learned from past successful AFI projects is

that data is the best tool for keeping the pulse of your project. You should be referring to your project data regularly. We suggest at least monthly, if not biweekly, to measure how your project is progressing towards meeting your goal. For instance, you can see how implementing a programmatic change, such as your match rate, would impact your outcomes, for example, your enrollment. Another example might include considering how the total number of IDA holders you have may indicate the effectiveness of your marketing and outreach strategy. If you are on top of your data, then you'll find reporting pretty easy.

Great. So that's the content that we wanted to cover today. So as we wrap up, let's just review our objective. In this presentation, we covered becoming familiar with AFI project reporting, including the AFI Performance Progress Report and the Federal Financial Report. And we also discussed data collection, performance management, and benchmarking. So we know that's a lot of detailed information to cover, so we'd like to pause now and see what questions that you have. Go ahead and type those in to the GoToWebinar interface.

Well great. So it looks like we do have one question at the moment, and as they jump to your mind, feel free to type them into the query box. Take advantage of this time to pick Heidi's brain. She's our expert on reporting requirements for the AFI program today. So Heidi, it looks like we've got a question around partial withdrawals. So the question is, how do you want us to report IDA participants that have made a matched withdrawal but not the entire portion? So further clarification, the saver may have saved the maximum amount allowed, but ended up not needing the entire amount, and so they withdrew the remaining portion when they made their matched withdrawal. What sort of guidance or recommendations, Heidi, would you provide around that question?

Heidi: Sure. So in the AFI PPR, especially in the long form where it gets into a lot more detail about participant accounts, you would report everything that they saved in the first place, because you don't know if they're going to go over or not. Then you would report how much they withdrew for their matched withdrawals, and then there is a field where you actually say what the current savings balance is for all accounts. So let's say all of your participants saved \$10,000, and between all of them they took out \$8,000 and now there's \$2,000 left over. So now you have a balance of \$2,000. So you'll have this balance remaining, and you'll report that. And so your numbers will still add up and it will make sense in the report.

Stephanie: Great, Heidi, that's really helpful.

Heidi: No problem.

Stephanie: OK. So we have another question that came in, and it's specific to this grantee but I'm sure it will be helpful for everyone if you have guidance around this. This person says they are a new grantee, but missed their first FFR deadline, so that's the SF-425. And so now GrantSolutions will not let them upload the report. What should this grantee do?

Heidi: Is this for me again?

Stephanie: Yeah, if you have any guidance for this.

Heidi: Well, just to be sure, I do work more on the PPR side, but I do also work on the help desk, so I get some of these questions. So you should definitely, if you're late on an FFR, contact your program specialist and make sure you're working with them. At the very least, you can still attach it as a grant note, which is a little less than ideal, only because if you are doing FFRs the normal way, it's an online form in GrantSolutions, so it's easier to track, easier to see that it's submitted. If it's a grant note, you know, it's essentially like an attachment in email. It might be easy to miss, and so you might have to remind them that they submitted it, if someone comes back to you saying it's missing. But if you do

attach it as an attachment to a grant note in GrantSolutions, it's at least in the official record. So whether or not someone goes through all those records, all those grant notes and sees it, there is give and take. If someone's busy they might miss it, but it is still at least in the record at that point. But definitely make sure you're working with your program specialist if you're late on any of your reports.

Stephanie: Thanks, Heidi. That's really helpful and exactly what I was going to say. Make sure you reach out to your AFI program specialist if you have an issue like this. They're your great first point of contact and they'll direct you appropriately. And the idea to have it as a note to have it in the record is really such a good suggestion, so thank you. So it looks like another two questions coming in about the AFI PPR. So the first we have Heidi, is there anywhere in the AFI PPR report that we can report excess funds that IDA holders withdrew? So for example, this client saved \$200 more than they were required to save to get the match, and now they want to withdraw that sort of extra \$200 savings of theirs. How would this person go about reporting this situation on the AFI PPR?

Heidi: That's a good question. I'm actually looking at Section C right now just to make sure my brain is not missing anything. There's two ways of going about it. I mean, ideally, I wouldn't want you to backtrack and lower that total savings amount that you would put, your all time cumulative savings. This might be an instance where you're going to get a warning in the system that will say hey, your numbers don't quite add up, and this is where you would use that optional narrative that you can attach to the cover page and just say, our number is off by \$200 because we had a participant who used additional savings for their own use after they made their matched withdrawal. So in that case you would have a warning, but it would be one of those instances where it's OK to have a warning because you have a valid explanation why the numbers don't work out.

Stephanie: Great. Thanks, Heidi. That's really helpful. So the other question about the PPR for you is, when a PPR is submitted certified with warnings, will the AFI PPR be sent back to the submitter?

Heidi: This gets into a little bit of the details of terminology. So certified with warnings is not submitted, that's just certified. OLDC unfortunately has a lot of steps to get to the submitted part. You have to validate and you have to certify, then you have to do that e-submit, then you have the actual submit button. So once you hit that final submit button, it will show as submitted or submitted with warnings, and that's when it comes to our team to do our quality control (QC) of your report. So at that point, we do that QC, we look for additional things beyond just those checks that the system does. If we see anything weird or if we see anything that maybe you should have explained in the optional narrative that you didn't, then we'll send it back for you to either fix or explain in the narrative. So two parts to that question. Definitely make sure when you're submitting you actually get it to say submit, otherwise it's technically not submitted and we don't review it. But yes, once things are submitted we do review them, and if we spot anything that looks a little questionable, that's when we'll send it back to you.

Stephanie: Great. Thanks so much, Heidi. So it looks like we have two more questions at the moment, but they're pretty specific to the individual grantee, so I just wanted to let those people know that I do see your questions, and what we're going to do, we'll reach out to you individually to follow up on those two things. So thank you for your patience on that. So everybody on the line, keep typing in your questions. But I just want to start wrapping this up, so by providing a couple resources, as always. The AFI Resource Center is a great resource. The link on the slide is to the website, and the contact information for the help desk is included. We've also included the links to the earlier webinars in the new grantee orientation series, which can be a great resource to review. And remember, as always, you can contact your AFI Resource Center and your AFI program specialist at any time if you have questions.

Alright? And it doesn't look like we've had any more questions come in. So I just want to thank you all so much for joining and participating today, and enjoy the rest of your day.