



# CDFI Grant Writing: Tips and Tricks



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September 2, 2021

# Today



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/ About Inclusiv / Our Mission

To help low-income people and communities achieve financial independence through credit unions

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## Mission Driven Credit Unions





# / CDFI Industry Overview /

- Established by Congress in 1994 to expand economic opportunity for underserved people and communities by supporting the growth & capacity of “Community Development Financial Institutions” (CDFIs)
- Inclusiv\* was instrumental in campaign to establish CDFI Fund
- Inclusiv was among first group of certified CDFIs and remains the only national CDFI-certified financial intermediary for credit unions
- More information available at [www.inclusiv.org](http://www.inclusiv.org)

\* Formerly the National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions

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## / CDFI Industry Overview /

Congress has focused on CDFIs as critical players in the national response to the current economic crisis.

COVID Relief bill includes \$12 billion in emergency capital for CDFIs and Minority Lending Institutions.

- \$3 billion for CDFI Fund grants
- \$9 billion for Treasury Department long term, low interest secondary capital loans



# / CDFI Industry Overview / CDFI Credit Unions in Illinois

Credit Union Name	City	Assets	Current Members	Minority Designated
Maroon Financial CU	Chicago	\$55,235,435	7,063	No
SIU CU	Carbondale	\$404,439,735	41,874	No
United FCU	Chicago	\$262,390,400	19,255	No
Park Manor Christian Church CU	Chicago	\$1,114,155	262	Yes
Unified Homeowners Of Illinois FCU	Chicago	\$578,920	302	Yes
Members First Community CU	Quincy	\$73,948,264	7,086	No
Fellowship Baptist Church CU	Chicago	\$496,119	411	Yes
Community Plus FCU	Rantoul	\$21,067,704	3,782	No
Israel Methcomm FCU	Chicago	\$1,478,474	219	Yes
South Side Community FCU	Chicago	\$5,996,927	1,550	Yes
IH Mississippi Valley CU	Moline	\$1,692,530,024	136,676	No
Chicago Municipal Employees FCU	Chicago	\$48,468,216	12,283	Yes
St. Mark United Methodist Church CU	Chicago	\$578,694	244	Yes
Illiana Federal Credit Union	Calumet City	\$290,838,544	24,329	No





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➤ *Only 22.5% of MDI credit unions in Illinois are CDFI Certified (7 out of 31)*



# / CDFI Industry Overview / CDFI Capital Opportunities

**CDFI Fund**  
\$3.2 Billion

CDFI Certification  
Required

CDFIs & MDIs Preferred  
(but not required)

Financial Assistance Grants

Technical Assistance Grants

Rapid Response Program Grants

COVID-19 Recovery Grants

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**U.S. Treasury**  
\$9.0 Billion

ECIP Secondary Capital



## / CDFI Grant Opportunity /

- CDFI capital grants (Financial Assistance, Technical Assistance, ) are an unmatched source of equity for Credit Unions

✓ Example: IH Mississippi Valley Credit Union

- Community-Based CU in Moline, Illinois
- 1.8 B Assets
- FOM reach in Illinois and Iowa
- 2014 LID
- 2015 CDFI Certification
- RRP wrote/funded



## / CDFI Grant Opportunity /

- CDFI Technical Assistance (TA) grants are available to both CDFIs and non-CDFIs (that can achieve certification within three years)

✓ Example: Israel Methcomm Federal Credit Union

- Founded June 1963
- 1.5 M Assets
- 1984 LID
- 2014 IMFCU and FBCUA Partnership resulted in CDFI Cert.
- 2016 wrote/not funded TA Grant
- 2017 wrote/funded TA Grant
- 2021 wrote/funded RRP

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## / CDFI Grant Preparation /

- What is SAM.gov? The system for Award Management (SAM.gov) is an official website of the U.S. Government. There is no cost to use SAM.gov
- How do I access it? SAM.gov has various tutorials on the entity need. Checkout their main page
- What is Grants.gov? Grants.gov is designed to enable federal grant-making agencies to create funding opportunities and applicants to find and apply for these grants.
- CDFI Fund AMIS Registration- CDFI Fund's Awards management Information system (AMIS) is an enterprise-wide business system built on a commercial off-the-shelf product called Salesforce, customized to meet the CDFI Funds specific needs



# / CDFI Grant Preparation /

- ✓ In partnership with CUNA Mutual group we have created a short video library you can access on the [Inclusiv CDFI Expertise Website](#):

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**Inclusiv and CUNA Mutual Group Release New Videos to Assist Credit Unions Applying for Stimulus Funding**

*New videos on NCUA's streamlined CDFI certification process and MDI designation*

The recent [COVID-19 relief legislation](#) advocated by Inclusiv contains significant new sources of funding being directed to underserved communities through CDFIs, especially communities of color. Inclusiv and CUNA Mutual Group are partnering to educate the industry about the value of the CDFI certification and increase credit union participation in these groundbreaking opportunities. As a part of this initiative, we've created a series of instructional videos to help credit unions through the application process for federal grant opportunities.



The newest group of videos includes three designed to assist low income credit unions interested in participating in the [National Credit Union Administration's \(NCUA\)](#) streamlined CDFI qualification and application process. Use these videos to help you meet the **Saturday, April 3** deadline!

### Stimulus Funding Instructional Videos

<b>How to apply under the NCUA's streamlined application process for CDFI certification</b>	<b>Required next steps if you're approved for streamlined certification</b>
	
<b>What to do if you're NOT approved for</b>	<b>An overview of the Minority Depository</b>

### Stimulus Funding Instructional Videos

<b>How to apply under the NCUA's streamlined application process for CDFI certification</b>	<b>Required next steps if you're approved for streamlined certification</b>
	
<b>What to do if you're NOT approved for streamlined certification</b>	<b>An overview of the Minority Depository Institution (MDI) designation</b>
	

**CDFI Grant Registration Videos**

- [Registering on Login.gov](#)
- [Registering on SAM.gov](#)
- [Registering on Grants.gov](#)
- [Registering on AMIS](#) (for CUs not yet CDFI certified interested in FA/TA grants)

[Visit the video library on our website.](#)

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# / Tools, Tips and Helpful Hints / Internal vs External Grant Writers

- Grant writers do not win CDFI grants – only CDFIs can do that
  - Good grant writers can ensure that applications are technically complete and competitive – after that, awards based largely on institutional data
- Internal Grant Writers
  - The most frequently awarded credit unions mostly write their own grants
  - Requires staff who have (or can acquire) expertise in federal grant procedures, automated systems and grant writing formats
  - In-house grant writers can explain credit union to CDFI Fund and also ensure that credit union management and staff understand CDFI requirements
  - Not all credit unions have sufficient staff resources to write CDFI Grants
- External Grant Writers
  - Reduces amount of staff time and provides technical expertise
  - Can ensure applications that are technically compliant
  - Still requires significant participation from credit union staff



# / Tools, Tips and Helpful Hints / External Grant Writers

- **What to look for:**

- ✓ The ideal grant writer will have experience with CDFI grants and credit unions
- ✓ At a minimum the grant writer should have experience with federal grant writing and some type of understanding of the role of financial institutions in economic development.
- ✓ The most successful grant applications are the result of strong relationships between the credit union and its grant writer.
- ✓ It helps to identify a grant writer as early in the process as possible so they will have a clear understanding of your products, programs and strategic direction, as well as the culture of the credit union. That will allow you to craft a narrative that meets your goals.



# / Tools, Tips and Helpful Hints / External Grant Writers

- **What to be wary of:**

- ✓ There are vast disparities in fees for grant writing engagements; and higher is not always better.
- ✓ Contracts cannot include fees that are contingent on success of grant application; federal rules prohibit the use of federal funds for grant writing purposes (and a contingency clause basically makes that link)



# / Tools, Tips and Helpful Hints / External Grant Writers

- **What to be sure to do:**
  - ✓ Start early and find a grant writer who understands your credit union culture and has experience applying to the CDFI Fund.
  - ✓ Own your application narrative; you will be responsible for meeting the performance goals in your application.



# / Tools, Tips and Helpful Hints / External Grant Writers

- **How Inclusiv can help:**

- ✓ Inclusiv members receive grant writing tools and training webinars and materials to help them complete their applications.
- ✓ Inclusiv also provides referrals to a network of consultants with extensive experience writing successful CDFI grant applications.



# / Tools, Tips and Helpful hints /

Lets hear from two Inclusiv policy members!



Dr. Joronda Crawford

Board Member  
Israel Methcomm Federal  
Credit Union

President  
Faith Based Credit Union  
Alliance



Ann McMillian

Chief Financial Health Officer  
IH Mississippi Valley Credit  
Union

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# / Inclusiv CDFI Services /

## / **inclusiv** / capital

- Financial Intermediation: Channeling resources from socially responsible investors: Non-member deposits and secondary capital that can be leveraged by growing CDCUs to expand safe and affordable lending to local communities.

## / **inclusiv** / mortgage

- Training and secondary market for members' mortgage loans enabling CDCUs to magnify impact in their communities.

## / **inclusiv** / network

- Webinars, conferences, technical assistance, research, training and advocacy to build credit union capacity for community development and financial inclusion

## / **inclusiv** / technology

- Innovative solutions that harness the power of technology and data to improve targeting, strengthen compliance and help credit unions to help their members.

## / **inclusiv** / communities

- Innovative approaches to reaching and serving communities historically underserved by the financial mainstream, such **Pathways to Financial Capability**, **Juntos Avanzamos** and the **On The Rise** financial center to help credit unions achieve greater financial inclusion and financial security for all.





# / Inclusiv CDFI Services / CDFI Eligibility & Certification

- Webinars and training specific to grant funding opportunities
- Inclusiv offers free CDFI eligibility analyses for all members
- Free and low-cost assistance with certification application preparation and submission
- Free annual recertification services for members
- Training, tools and other support available for CDFI funding opportunities
- Membership discounts for small and MDI credit unions as part of 2021 certification initiative in partnership with CUNA Mutual Group
  - ✓ 50% Inclusiv Membership discount for CUs <\$100M in Assets
  - ✓ Discounted CDFI certification engagements following the Inclusiv methodology
  - ✓ See further info in follow-up materials
    - Contact Jules Epstein-Hebert ([jhebert@inclusiv.org](mailto:jhebert@inclusiv.org))



# / Inclusiv CDFI Services / CDFI Eligibility & Certification

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2021 CDFI Lending Profile

XYZ Credit Union  
Anytown, USA

NCUA Number: 99999

The following pages provide a summary of results from an analysis of 2020 loan data that your credit union submitted to Inclusiv for the CDFI Fund's 2021 Annual Certification Report (ACR).

In addition to the CDFI Target Market Analysis, which is the core of the ACR process, this profile provides data that may be useful in completing data tables and narrative portions of other credit union applications for CDFI Financial Assistance (FA), CDFI Technical Assistance (TA), or the Treasury Department's Emergency Capital Investment Program (ECIP).

Comments or questions on this report may be submitted to Jules Epstein-Hebert, [jhebert@inclusiv.org](mailto:jhebert@inclusiv.org)

39 Broadway Suite 2140, New York, NY 10006 | T. 212 809 3274  
[inclusiv.org](http://inclusiv.org) | [info@inclusiv.org](mailto:info@inclusiv.org)

- Inclusiv members that use our free recertification service receive detailed analytics such as
  - ✓ CDFI Target Market Lending
  - ✓ Lending in Persistent Poverty Counties
  - ✓ Lending in Opportunity Zones
  - ✓ Lending in High Poverty Areas
  - ✓ Lending in Low- and Moderate-Income Communities
  - ✓ Financial Inclusion Ratio™
  - ✓ PPP Lending in CDFI Target Markets
  - ✓ Diversity Lending Profile
  - ✓ Lending by Credit Tier

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# / Inclusiv CDFI Services / Small & MDI Outreach

- Inclusiv TA and Outreach Small and MDI CDFIs can help with
  - ✓ AMIS Navigation
    - Organizational Registration and Profile
  - ✓ General Application Support
    - Board Accountability
    - Launching Application
    - Required Attachments
    - Target Market Data & Narratives
    - Development Services
    - Attestation & Submission



Monica Copeland

[mcopeland@inclusiv.org](mailto:mcopeland@inclusiv.org)

(919) 265-7390



# / Inclusiv CDFI Services / For More Information

- Come to Inclusiv CDFI office hours
  - <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=VIEoGmEnkCRqLt6Al4toHSFhuv9iGNHirmYo--8YMtUQ1UxVFA5U1REQTNSVUxGMUVPVUpOOU1RTS4u>
- Visit the CDFI resources section of Inclusiv's website:
  - <https://www.inclusiv.org/expertise/cdfi-support/>
- Contact Chriselle Martinez @ [cmartinez@inclusiv.org](mailto:cmartinez@inclusiv.org)



# **/ Inclusiv-Illinois Credit Union League /**

## **Thank you to all that attended! Previous recorded session available on ICUL website:**

- July 28, 2021 (10-11am CT)- CDFI Certification Overview- Join the Inclusiv team in an overview of CDFI history and foundational information on the CDFI Certification and Low-Income Designation.
- August 4, 2021 (10-11am CT)- Steps to CDFI Certification- Join the Inclusiv team in reviewing the CDFI Certification process: Importance, 7 tests, and paths to certification.
- September 1, 2021 (10-11am CT)- CDFI Grant Writing: Tips and Tricks- Join the Inclusiv team in reviewing CDFI Grant opportunities, Helpful tips, and resources.



Credit Union Network



**Pablo DeFilippi**  
SVP, Network Engagement  
[Pablo@inclusiv.org](mailto:Pablo@inclusiv.org)  
212.809.1850 ext. 304



**Monica Copeland**  
Senior Program Officer  
[mcopeland@inclusiv.org](mailto:mcopeland@inclusiv.org)



**Jules Epstein-Hebert**  
Director of Membership  
[jhebert@inclusiv.org](mailto:jhebert@inclusiv.org)  
212.809.1850 ext. 211



**Chriselle Martinez**  
CDFI Program Director  
[cmartinez@inclusiv.org](mailto:cmartinez@inclusiv.org)



**Terry Ratigan**  
Senior Consultant  
[tratigan@inclusiv.org](mailto:tratigan@inclusiv.org)

# *Questions*