FINISHED FILE

NATIONAL DISABILITY INSTITUTE

Entrepreneurship, Disability and CDFIs

Session 5: CDFI and Founder Experiences

May 2, 2023

2:00 p.m. ET

Services provided by:

Caption First, Inc.

P.O. Box 3066

Monument, CO 80132

719‑941‑9557

www.captionfirst.com

This text, document, or file is based on live transcription. Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), captioning, and/or live transcription are provided in order to facilitate communication accessibility and may not be a totally verbatim record of the proceedings. This text, document, or file is not to be distributed or used in any way that may violate copyright law.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Welcome, welcome to Entrepreneurship, Disability and CDFIs Session 5: CDFI and Founder Experiences. We'll be beginning shortly.

Next slide.

So before we start today's webinar, we'll just go through some basic housekeeping. So first, Zoom settings ‑‑

The audio for today's meeting can be accessed using computer audio, or by calling in by phone. If you select computer audio, please make sure your speakers are turned on, or your headphones are plugged in.

To call in for audio, dial ‑‑ 301‑715‑8592. And the meeting code is 880 7070 8213.

The ASL interpreter will have a spotlight throughout the presentation. For the best viewing experience, please navigate to speaker view, using the options at the top right of your screen. We do have captioning. The captions can be found by clicking on the CC button in the Zoom controls at the bottom of the screen.

If you do not see captions after clicking the CC button, please alert the host via the chat box.

Next slide.

Questions and technical assistance. Please send your questions, concerns, and any requests for technical assistance to the NDI host via the chat box.

If you would prefer to ask your questions in ASL, please raise your hand and wait to be called on by the Host.

We'll be taking questions at the end of the presentation, as time allows. If your question is not answered during the webinar, you are listening by phone, or you're unable to use the chat box, please email ajones@ndi‑inc.org.

Please note too, this webinar is being recorded, and the materials will be available at www.disabilitysmallbusiness.org, on our past events page, within the next 1 to 2 weeks. Next slide.

Again, welcome to Entrepreneurship, Disability and  CDFIs, our fifth session.

I am Caroline Bolas, Small Business Specialist with NDI's Small Business Team, and before I introduce our wonderful speaker for today, I want to say a bit about the series as a whole. Today is the last of our five‑part series.

In case you missed the first four webinars, we will put the link to where you will be able to go back and view as your leisure.

The first webinar was presented by National Disability Finance  Coalition and they gave a great overview of what CDFI is, how they work, how you might access information, and that's a really great overview if you're new to the CDFI world. We then had three wonderful presentations from three CDFIs with representatives from Justine Petersen, Life Asset and Northwest Access Fund.

And we also heard from individuals who had borrowed from those CDFIs and now have their own businesses.

For those who have not attended the previous webinars, these webinars have come about from a project that we have been working on here at NDI for some time.

Through an earlier research project that NDI undertook on behalf of JP Morgan Chase and Co, we identified that accessing capital for most entrepreneurs but for those with disabilities they can find it particularly challenging. It can be challenging sometimes to access traditional lenders so CDFIs can potentially be an alternative form of funding that people can seek to access.

However, we found that many entrepreneurs have really no idea what a CDFI is, what they do, how they may differ from a traditional bank. We found those supporting entrepreneurs, disability support services, equally had never heard of CDFIs and didn't know how to advise, didn't even know that they existed and how they might be an option and then conversely, on speaking with various CDFIs, we found that many are not asking the question, does the person who wants to borrow have a disability? So they don't know if they're serving individuals with disabilities, they're not asking the question, do you need an accommodation to really help us serve you better?

And really don't necessarily know how best to meet the needs of the disability community. And so to really bridge the gap between those two worlds, we came together to have these series of webinars so if we do have any CDFIs listening today who are interested in learning more about maybe how they can better serve individuals with disabilities, NDI would be very happy to work with you, so please don't hesitate to contact us and we'll put our details in the chat box so you'll have that, as well.

But today's session, we're going to hear from one particular CDFI whose entire purpose is dedicated solely to advancing the needs of people with disabilities. I am delighted to welcome Charles Hammerman from Disability Opportunity Fund. Charles is the President and CEO of Disability Opportunity Fund, or DOF. DOF's efforts are focused on creating a society where financing is readily available to address the gap in housing, employment, education, and related services for people with disabilities and their families.

Charles has a very long extensive career in the financial world, and is going to be a great speaker to really just tell us about what his CDFI does, but more generally how CDFIs can support entrepreneurs with disabilities so with that I'm going to hand it over to Charles and thank you so much for being here today.

>> CHARLES HAMMERMAN: Thank you, Caroline. Before we get started, for those who need to have some more information, I am almost three weeks from today will be a 60‑year‑old white male. I am wearing currently a red pull‑over, very little hair on my head, nice and bald, and other than that, very pleased to be here today and making this presentation. Disability Opportunity Fund has been around for, we just completed our 15th year of operations. We're in our 16th year as a CDFI, and if we'd start the slides now we'll get started in explaining who we are.

Next slide, please. In terms of our impact and accomplishments, the sense of what we've been able to grow over the course of 15 years is from a very small organization back in 2008 of about $300,000, we're now managing over $70 million in assets. We've done over 100 transactions over the course of the 15 years. On the righthand side of the slide, you'll see we are certified by United States Treasury Department called the CDFI Fund. We have been rated in Aeris previously, and we have a Platinum Seal of Transparency on GuideStar, as well. Next slide, please.

So what do we do? It's great to keep saying CDFI, CDFI. Community Development Financial Institution. What we have decided to do, as Disability Opportunity Fund, being a National fund, so even though we're located here in New York, we operate nationally, and we have multifaceted products in terms of what we offer everybody, is these four things.

We actually finance loans. In essence, think of us as a not‑for‑profit bank. We have done equity investing, which we'll discuss, as well. We actually have owned some real estate, as well, and finally, we are not a Foundation. However, under a new program we created a couple of years ago called DOF Cares, we have been able to give some philanthropic money away that was provided to us by donors and sponsors who asked us to do the granting for them. Next slide, please. The.

And we like to say, this work is actually making a difference here. Here are just two examples in quotes. One from a service provider in California, and one from the Midwest, just basically saying some nice things about DOF. For those who have visually impaired I'll just read one of the quotes, the DOF understands the mission of non‑profits such as ours, the vision of the DOF comes across as engaged and helpful. They truly act as a partner in our mission of delivering vital services to a vulnerable population in society.

And we hope that's what we can accomplish as a CDFI. Yes, we have a financial framework upon which we measure our work, but really, it boils down to what are borrowers saying? What are their partners saying? And what kind of impact are we truly having for society?

Next slide, please.

We've divided the disability framework into six focus areas. We don't know whether we're short‑sighted on any of these things of missing a 7th but we think we've covered everything, under the ‑‑ some, of course, cross over on multiple focus areas, but housing is one. Education, employment, socialization, and then we combined health care and life sciences and we combined technology and products, so in essence when we're looking at a loan, when we're looking at an investment, we say, well, where would it fit in either one or multiple of these boxes? And then we track it from there.

Next slide, please.

Most importantly for us, when we are doing our work, is to measure social impact, so again, for those who are visually impaired, may not be able to see this slide, this slide looks a little busy but it's not. If anyone does recognize the color scheme, these are the color schemes that the United Nations has created for their SDG, their social development goals, and we tried to overlay our work on to their goals.

However, in the boxes around the circle, those are actual numbers that we gather data each year from our borrowers and others that we do work with, to then measure how many people we're helping, and what kind of accomplishments we've been able to make. So this is very critical to us. As CDFIs in general we're supposed to be tracking this data but for Disability Opportunity Fund, we take it one step further and we actually make it an event of default if a borrower does not respond with social impact data, because we take this information very, very seriously.

Next slide, please.

So here are some of the loans that we've done. We're not going to go through every single one of these. We're actually going to talk and there will be a video at the end about the first one on the right hand side, this is a slide where it shows one of our ‑‑ an example of one of our loans in each of the six categories, and also for those on the phone, and on listening to this afterwards, some of these are for‑profit enterprises and some are not‑for‑profit. So, in fact, in looking at this slide, 3 are not‑for‑profit and three are for‑profit enterprises on this slide itself.

Next slide, please.

This is a slide on our portfolio companies meaning that as of today, these are the 7 companies that we have currently in our portfolio of investments. These are not loans. These are actual direct investments for venture capital or equity investments, however you want to describe it. And again, we're very excited. Again, for those who are visually impaired, I'll read off the 7 names. Floreo, Opya, VoiceITT, Joshin, No Limbits, Hiki, Enabled Intelligence, and each have their most amazing stories. Some provide products for people with disabilities. Others employ people with disabilities, and one, No Limbits, is actually owned and founded by a person with disabilities and is a very exciting and great story, so we encourage everyone to look at those stories as well in terms of successes. Next slide, please.

So in this slide, it's a description of some of the real estate that we have gotten ourselves involved with. In this case, this is in Arizona ‑‑ I'm sorry, in West Virginia, where we have done economic redevelopment of a downtown that back in 2016 had a flood, and we've done a lot of work in the last 4 years. We entered into this community exactly 4 years ago this week actually, and bought a commercial and residential strip on this block and then continued to buy the whole rest of the block. We renovated everything, we leased it out, back to commercial space Social Security and then on the right hand side of this slide for those who cannot see, there's a picture of an Ace Hardware. We actually brought that Ace Hardware using our own capital and our own investments money to this community, which has not seen a hardware store in over 20 years, and people who needed things from a hardware store had to go about a half hour, just to get simple needs.

So we did some great economic development. What does this have to do with disabilities? Well, in 2 cases, in the Ace Hardware, we hired 9 employees to open up the store, 3 of whom had disabilities, and in one of the commercial spaces, we started, we helped get started with our capital a first‑ever for‑profit school for children with varying disabilities, which not only is still open, but is incredibly successful. Next slide, please.

And one added thing that we did was whale we were making the development of this downtown, there was an old school that had not been used for 30 years. The school District decided to move children to another school, and this building remained dormant. Again, for those who cannot see this slide, this is a very large, 50,000 square foot school building that we have now taken over. We took this over about 3 years ago, and totally renovated a 50,000 square foot schoolhouse to make it into a hotel, but we pent one step further and made it into the world's first fully successful hotel, and that includes not just ADA compliant doorways but we added a tremendous amount of accessibility with technology.

We added a tremendous amount of sensitivity on all varying disabilities, took a lot of interviews with varying disability groups as to what to incorporate into this building, and we opened exactly a year ago, it was May 1st of last year, where we opened up. It's been received incredibly well, and we hope this will continue for many years to come.

Next slide, please.

CDFIs also provide technical assistance and in this case a webinar like today. As you can see we've listed NDI as our partner here. We do 1:1 meetings with entrepreneurs. We help create development ‑‑ business plans, we meet with families, we work within the community, and one thing that we did about almost 8 years ago was create the National Disability Finance Coalition so what Caroline was mentioning before which we hope there are some CDFIs on this call but we started to organize the number of CDFIs who were doing work in this area and not making it just about DOF, and I think they just posted in the chat room a link to NDFC. We encourage every single person on this call, whether you are a CDFI or whether you are a small business that is seeking capital, to go on to that website and take a look, because we're not the only game in town. In fact, a number of people who will come to us first, we will direct them to NDFC to see if there's a more local partner in the community that you're in that can potentially help you out either with technical assistance or with financing. Next slide, please. So we're almost wrapping up the slides and what I thought we would do here is, it's always hard to try to get a borrower or somebody else to come on to one of these webinars and make this very, very efficient so what we're going to do here is actually show you a video from Rising Tide car wash and then I'll talk about it with the final slide about some other examples of who has borrowed from us in the past.

So whoever is controlling, if you can play the video, please, for everyone.

[ No audio ]

I think we need sound.

[ No audio ]

I hope somebody's working on the video and that's why it's quiet right now.

¶  ¶

>> CHARLES HAMMERMAN: Perfect, so let's go to the last slide, or next slide. Yes, okay.

So let's talk about Rising Tide car wash and then we'll talk about the other two examples here. So Rising Tide car wash was a perfect example of, where does a CDFI come into play, versus just going to a normal bank, or maybe even combining both.

This started as a technical assistance conversation here on Long Island many years ago. I'm going to say it probably goes back almost 7 years ago, where the founders of Rising Tide car wash just had an idea, and they came to our office on Long Island, said they were moving to Florida, and would like to start a not‑for‑profit car wash in Florida, where they can employ people with disabilities, and autism, to run the car wash.

And in listening to the story and trying to understand the business plan, I asked whether car washes were a profitable business, and they said yes, they were incredibly profitable. I said then why do you want to run this as a not‑for‑profit? Isn't it a better story to run it as a for‑profit and pay the employees living wages?

The response was fascinating, because the ‑‑ from very intelligent people who obviously are dealing with somebody with autism in their own family, the response to me was: Are we allowed to? And that's a perception issue. And think about how far society has come from even those 7 years ago to where NDI is running a major program out of the small business administration just for entrepreneurs with disabilities. So again there's a lot of perception issues where a CDFI comes to the table very differently than a banker and can ask those kind of questions and make people think so off they went to Florida. I did not hear from them for about a year. NBC News made a big story about them, about their first car wash. They did finance it with their own capital, not even financing it with a bank or anyone else, and they came back with the response that there was such incredible feedback from the NBC piece that they were now looking at the second car wash, and would we be involved in helping finance the growth into the second car wash.

Long story short, we not only helped them with the first loan, we made a second loan, and then a third loan to the point where in the video, you could see that they have now grown to 3 locations. They have now 100% paid off the loan to DOF. They are out on their own now. They do have some local bank financing, and that's a perfect CDFI story. We are not DOF specifically is not meant to be there for the long term. It was meant to be there for a short term, help a project move to the next level and get a company to the next level and then move on.

And therefore, we can recycle our capital to the many, many other companies and projects that are always looking for capital.

I put on these other two companies, one is called Omnium and hopefully somebody in the chat can put the link to the omnium circus but here's a company of again in this case a not‑for‑profit but it really looks like a for‑profit company out of Brooklyn that conducts a circus where all the performers self‑identify with disabilities.

And have been around the country now performing. We have given a working capital loan to Omnium, and they trade to launch right in the middle of COVID, which obviously was very disturbing for them, because not being able to put on performances during COVID, a typical bank would have not been able to be as flexible as we were being in terms of trying to get them through that period of time, and they have been successful not only in paying back our monthly interest but they're starting to pay back some of the principal because now they're back on track and having a lot of events and performances.

I provided the last example, Yellow Bird, because that was 100% referred to us by NDI through this program, and we were just referred to ‑‑ connected with NDI about 2 months ago or so. I was fortunate enough to be out from New York in Arizona where I got to meet the founder of the company, and we're putting them through a due diligence process right now.

It's a terrific company. The founder has a disability, self‑identifies with a disability, and we're going to be thrilled if things work out on that front, because they're in their growth mode, and we'd love to see them grow, and ultimately as we'd like with all of our borrowers to sort of use us and then get rid of us and then move on and keep their companies growing and such.

So I think I've done enough right now in terms of presentation. I think that was my last slide. I'm being shown a quote ‑‑ a question.

Got it. Okay. So I'll respond. I was shown one of the questions already in the chat, and then I'll open it up to Caroline to help me with some other questions.

There was a question about differentiating equity and traditional equity financing. I don't know if the nature of the question ‑‑ if I don't answer it correctly in terms of what you're asking, just ask again. But we are talking about traditional equity financing, so in this case, we carry a balance sheet of debt, meaning that we are making loans and they're called loans, or notes receivable. That is money that needs to get paid back to us with interest, and the balloon payment at the end of the loan, and that's a more traditional lending product.

On the equity side, equity is a direct investment. Those 7 companies, we are shareholders. There's no guarantee that we will ever see a return on our investment. They're very high‑risk, and therefore they do not dictate the biggest portion of our balance sheet at this point, but we are very excited about the prospects of what we have invested in, and it's also not playing the stock market.

What it is, is us not only investing in the companies and going through due diligence, but rather, we are very involved in the companies in helping them grow, understanding their stories, and literally putting them through 3 filters of how we look at investments. First, is, and this goes for the loans as well, but especially for the investments, will the project, will the company that we're financing, be providing something that's consistent with public policy in the disability arena?

The second filter is to see and measure management. Do we have belief in management? Do we like management? Do we think they know what they're doing? And the third, then, we look at the financial deal on the table, whether it's a loan or an investment, and we make a decision as to whether we believe that in the loan perspective, will that be a loan that can pay us back? And then the equity, will it provide a return on our capital sufficient to our timeline, and obviously risk parameters, so I hope that answered your question, and if not, just please ask again and let me know.

So why don't I take a deep breath, and, Caroline, do you want to handle Q&A from here?

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Perfect. Thanks, Charlie. As a reminder, either put your question in the chat box, or if you particularly if you want to use ASL, raise your hand, and Lexi will spotlight you and you can come on camera. So I'm going to start with the first question and there's quite a few, Charlie, so keep that breath. You're gonna need it. The first one is a more generic one: What advice do you have to make sure a business owner is ready to approach a CDFI for funding or financing?

>> CHARLES HAMMERMAN: Excellent question.

I would like to say, it's interesting, if you use the analogy of going shopping, I described myself as someone who was wearing a red pull‑over. It doesn't cost any of us to go to the mall, to go to a store, and shop and take a look at the yellow pullover and the red pullover, the green pullover, try it on and go into the fitting room and come back on and come back out. And just at the moment, the absolute perfect moment, of the cash register going and the salesperson saying, can't wait to make this sale and get my Commission, you as the shopper are able to say: No, not interested. Let's move on. And there's no harm, no foul. This is what shopping is all about.

With CDFIs, I'd like to say that people think that because most of us, I would say probably 99% of CDFIs are not for profits, they believe we're sitting around all day waiting for people to come shopping and the fact is that while there is an aspect of technical assistance that we do provide free of service and free of charge, and there's no ‑‑ and my favorite phrase for the last 16 years has always been: You get one first phone call for free.

The fact is, we are not‑for‑profits. Most of us are small organizations and therefore, our time is very, very critical, so to answer that question, I know it sounds very cliché, but you must prepare. We're not just sitting around, and trust me, we get phone calls upon phone calls upon phone calls of: Hey, I'm a person with a disability, and I want to open up this, or I'm thinking about starting my business, and call me back.

It's like, okay. So we do have a process internally here at DOF, and my colleague who's sitting to my left right now listening to all of this and helping, Robbie Goldberg, gets bombarded with me passing along and saying okay, you do the first call and see if they're ready and in terms of our work with NDI that is part of the mandate, which is to talk to people and find out what's going on.

Now, to get back to the question at hand, who wants to be truly successful? Those are those who actually do their homework ahead of time. All of us have websites. All of us, there's so much information on the internet about CDFIs in general, about each of us individually. As I said, there's the National Coalition of CDFIs, and you should be able to learn a whole lot about all of us, and about some of our borrower stories.

So for instance, on our website, we put videos and other discussion points about some of our borrowers just to give some sense of example. That doesn't mean you have to come to a CDFI fully cooked‑up. We had just a recent example of an NDI referral, somebody who went to NDI came to us, said they'd like to borrow money. It was a business owner with a disability, and we did do the first phone call. We actually did two phone calls on that one, because the business owner was deaf, and we coordinated through Zoom like we're doing today with a sign interpreter, and we actually shared screen and we did amortization schedules. We really spent a lot of time, and if we were lawyers, like in my previous life, that person would have gotten billed a lot of money per hour to have somebody on the phone doing that.

With CDFIs, we don't charge to have that kind of technical assistance, and it was good to do that, because we went very far with that conversation. It was a terrific organization and company that's been around for many years. And after we gave them ‑‑ we gave them homework assignments. We told them to think through certain things. They just recently came back to us and said: We're not ready. We will be ready. We believe we're going to be ready. Can we come back to you in a few months? And of course, the answer is: Yes.

So really being prepared ‑‑ I know it's very cliché ‑‑ but the truth is, if you're going to make an ask, this is not like going into a bank branch. It's not ‑‑ we don't work on Commission or anything else. No one's trying to make a sale. We are trying to make sure that we are getting you from point A to point B. Well, to do that, help yourself, and what I mean by that is: Come very prepared. Any underwriting, anybody who's going to want to have a conversation are going to want to know ‑‑ what is your financial situation? What is the formation? What is the organization? Is it an LLC? Is it incorporated? Who are the owners? How long have you been in business? Is this a new business? What's your idea, what does your business plan look like? Just try to picture yourself sitting on the other side of the table wanting to want to ask all those questions, well, then, come to the table with the answers so it will make it much more efficient in the first go‑around. I hope that answered the question.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Thanks, Charlie. I think there may be follow‑up. I should read one out to you because it's lengthy and CDFI related. All the dedicated federal funding programs CDFIs can access to help support this sort of work either grant cap call, and/or for greater enhancement and other back stop sort of support.

>> CHARLES HAMMERMAN: If that's a CDFI that's asking the answer is short and now I get to be a salesperson because yes, you should be reaching out to us at NDFC. That's why we provided the link. It is a membership organization with no dues. How about that one? A membership organization that CDFIs can join and should join because yes, of course, there is a very formal program from the CDFI Fund. The CDFI Fund is based out of the United States Treasury Department. It is an incredibly competitive granting program. There's varying levels of it so if you're not a certified CDFI, there's one level of grant programming to help you get certified. If you are certified but have not gone through that program, then we as a Coalition help each other, for neophytes who have never done this before, we help them get through a process of learning how to apply. There's also lobbying and efforts within the Coalition to help you understand every one of the programs, what's going on, and if you were to tell us what geography you are from, we actually have someone who represents us on Capitol Hill who can then bring you to your local Congressperson or Senator, and explain what work you are doing in the local community.

So it's extremely powerful, and has absolutely zero cost to CDFIs, which I'm very proud of as a legacy so again I hope that answered the question and you've want more information, again, please go on to the National Disability Finance Coalition website. Just make an inquiry, and somebody from the Coalition will reach back out very quickly.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Thanks, Charlie. Just to say Michelle before had said yes you answered her question great around that first question around equity.

But we have another CDFI related one. In regions/communities where there are no CDFIs, there's no CDFIs currently existing, how can local leaders and decision makers foster an environment that supports or proactively encourages the formation of a CDFI within their community?

>> CHARLES HAMMERMAN: Yeah, and that's a fantastic question, and the answer, first answer, given the environment right this second, is: Call us first, and we will discuss that specifically. Why? Because there's a moratorium right now on certifying new CDFIs. The government, the CDFI Fund, is literally going through a new process to accept comments on what certification should look like in the future, and we truly do not believe that they're going to open up new applications for at least the rest of this year, maybe potentially into next year.

And even then, we have no idea as to how long it's going to take for them to take, let's say they open up the window, they take an application, and we have absolutely no idea, there's no guidance as to how long it's going to take to respond and get a new entity certified.

The reason for that was the explosion of certified CDFIs. Back in 2008 when we became certified there were about 700 CDFIs. I'd say about 500 were active. 200 were sort of inactive.

And if you look today, there are about 1100 CDFIs so there's been this incredible growth, and that's because there's been incredible funding streams from Congress, supporting CDFIs through the '08‑'09 crisis, then through COVID and such.

So where there's money, they will attract more demand and that's where the CDFI Fund sort of put a moratorium and said okay, no more new ones. So how do you serve an area like a rural area in West Virginia that we are serving, that obviously we don't have an office there, we were brought there by request? How do you fill in other geographic gaps?

Well, call us, because if it has either generally a gap and it has nothing to do with disabilities, we'll introduce you to the folks who would like to fill in those gaps and of course if there's more of a focus on disability work, then we and the others in the Coalition can help determine who covers that geography from a Regional basis. Great question.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Another. I think it's so rare for CDFIs to have this type of environment to ask these questions so I have another one for you.

What advice would you give a credit union/CDFI who is considering helping members with disabilities utilizing its CDFI certification? Any suggestions on collecting and reporting data for annual certification? Outside of HMDA requirements, we typically do not ask for this information.

>> CHARLES HAMMERMAN: So that's another great question, and again, I don't mean to default but that should be its own webinar, not webinar, but that's a big discussion point, and I would really hope that whoever's asking that question from the credit union, if they're not already connected to us through the Coalition, please reach out immediately.

So just I should have explained: I created the Coalition out of a grant that we received, just as NDI and Caroline explained the JP Morgan Chase Foundation helped create this program for NDI and some of the other things. JP Morgan Chase Foundation was good enough 8 years ago to give us a grant that we told them we were going to start a Coalition, and they've supported it every year since, and it's now grown to its own organization, its own 501(c)(3), its own 501(C)(4) and we've grown from just a small group of us in a room to now over 100‑plus CDFIs and many, many other type of members.

On the credit union question about metrics and about how you ask those questions, we dealt with this back in 2019 as a ‑‑ with the CDFI Fund itself, and going around the country and talking to credit unions and banks and other CDFIs about how to gather that data so the reason I'm only going to punt on this answer right this second is, we do have a lot of teaching materials, and we've gone through this discussion, and what we would love to do is continue to facilitate that conversation through the Coalition, because also, one of our members at the Coalition is inclusive, which is of course the Coalition of credit unions, and they are taking the subject matter on disabilities very seriously, as well.

So I would just like to put that ‑‑ it's a perfect question. It's a really important one. We know that credit unions are going to continue to play a major role in CDFI world, and getting big CDFI Funding so we would love to continue that conversation offline from this webinar through the Coalition. That would be fantastic. And thank you for participating.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Thanks, Charlie. So we had some general questions about the sort of loans, including for example, do you need conditional guarantor, collateral? Is there a size of a loan that you tend to give. So maybe you can give some overall information about your small business lending, the type of loans et cetera and that might answer some of those questions. Oh, can I hold you just a second? We're not spotlighting our interpreter so could you wait just a moment until ‑‑

>> CHARLES HAMMERMAN: There we go.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: I'm just checking. Are we good to go?

One minute. Okay, we're now good. So thank you for that, Charlie.

>> CHARLES HAMMERMAN: No, no, that's fantastic. So in terms of products, yes, we actually of course have loan policies and we present all of that. But really, that's why the technical assistance and the inquiries are pretty critical for us, because when we get an entry point of dollar size, if it doesn't fit us, then that's when we'll make referrals.

So let's talk about CDFIs in general and then we'll talk about Disability Opportunity Fund specifically. In terms of ‑‑ and I know that we're on this slide on the questions, but if you'd go way, way back, and there were the four items and loans was one of them, and pull that slide up, that would be great while I'm talking about CDFIs in general.

So just so everyone understands, and obviously we have some CDFIs on the webinar today, there are many different types of CDFIs so in the world of assistive technology, there are assistive technology funds.

Keep going back a couple more slides.

Keep going. Two more. Perfect. Stay there, please.

So there are many CDFIs who do assistive technology and those are very small loans. Those could be from $500 up to $25,000, for things like iPads or conversion vans or assistive technology has a very large descriptor. In terms of business loans, same thing. Clearly we are on a webinar about the Small Business Administration. We do not, DOF, does not provide SBA 7a loans, but there are many CDFIs who do and they don't necessarily have to have disabilities in their title. There are many CDFIs that just do the normal SBA 7a program. In terms of again for what we do at DOF, back in the day when we were a smaller organization, our average loan size was about 150 to $200,000. Our average loan size now has grown to about a million to $2 million. But that doesn't stop us from taking on special projects. Our smallest loan right now was a $50,000 loan on a project that we did in West Virginia that was very important to us.

We have a couple of loans in sort of like the 300 to $500,000 range that again because of the projects, we don't do volume. We don't maintain more than about 20 to 25 relationships at any one time because that's the size of the CDFI that we are. Nevertheless, there are other CDFIs that do more volume. There will be those that do consumer lending, which we don't do.

As I say, there will be SBA 7a lending. What we've put on the screen here for those who have visually impaired and may not be able to see the slide on financing loans, these are acquisition ‑‑ this is on real estate side, acquisition, pre‑development, construction. What we call a mini perm, a permanent loan is usually 15 to 30 years. Mini means we probably don't go further out than 5 years, even though we'll amortize those loans potentially at 20 or 25 years. We did create a new product, again people are asking about collateral or guarantors.

We created a new product out of need here in New York City. There was the private schools that were waiting for their tuition payments from their local municipality, in this case, the City of New York, but they needed to pay teachers, and they needed to pay the therapists so we came in with a bridge loan product. Clearly there was no collateral per se. We associated the repayments along the lines of the settlements that the schools were going ‑‑ and the parents were going to have with the City so we got creative there. The final category on this page is working capital and that's for most of you on this call about entrepreneurship and business.

Look, it all is going to depend. There are times where we would like to have a guarantor. There will be times where we know we can't get a guarantee. But again, it's the question of what we are financing. Are we financing a gap of a 100% payment, again whether it's an account receivable, or in this case, it was a tuition payment that was going to come from a municipality. Or is it just trying to say: Hey, I need, $50,000, $100,000, $500,000, because I want to start my own business?

Well, that's a whole other ballgame of what we'll have to discuss and such. So again it may not be a perfect answer to your question in terms ‑‑ because every situation will require a different response. In terms of loan to value, for us, we do have policies in place that will go way past what banks do.

Our loan policies allow us to go to 90%, that's 9‑0, 90%, loan to value, on certain situations. Typically we're more in the 75% range but we are allowed to get a little riskier, again, depending on the situation and why we are doing that loan.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Thanks, Charlie. That was great. Just a few things, in terms of the chat we have been putting in for example a link that you can find your local CDFI. There's a couple of different ways of doing that and we will be sending out after the webinar all of the chat links, so don't think that you have to get them down now.

I can also see some questions around how do I contact people in person? One thing I would say and again we're going to put this in at the end of the presentation, you can contact NDI, our community navigator Ruth Chavez and she'll be able to connect with you virtually and really help you navigate the various different options that you might have.

And that can include referring to Charles as he said earlier. But again, we'll definitely try and help you navigate some of those conversations that people want to have.

And then again a link trying to bring things together, someone asked about supporting deaf‑owned businesses. You also talked a bit about how you set up that meeting. But can you just say a bit about how you ensure that you services are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities? And perhaps give some more examples?

>> CHARLES HAMMERMAN: Yes. The basic example ‑‑ well, I'll tell you the perfect example is The Schoolhouse Hotel that we built. It was with a philosophy that in sitting with architects who could pull off of the shelf and didn't need education on the ADA compliance, a sense of going beyond compliance, and saying: Well, what else do we want to think through that you guys didn't even think about?

So I'll give you one fun example, and we really would encourage anyone on this call, I know West Virginia seems a little out of the way, but for those in driving distance within 3 to 4 hours of White Sulfur Springs, you're in either Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, or Washington, D.C., so there's about 21 million of you that should be able to drive there and you should go see it and have some fun with it, with the attitude that we weren't, as long as people will come visit us and not play gotcha, we understand that we may not think everything through, so therefore, just tell us. We're always learning ourselves what the newest technology is, or the newest way to handle certain things.

But for instance, two aspects of the hotel that we instituted very simply, which is for someone who is hard of hearing and you pull up to the front desk, and of course, 99% of the time, some people behind the front desk will not know ASL or anything else. Well, we did the investigation and learned about Genie and some of the other apps that we have an iPad at the desk, and if somebody needs a sign interpreter, within 30 seconds we hit the app and there will be a sign interpreter, and those are the kinds of things we educated ourselves and went through the experience of learning.

All the way to a different example of the bar at the restaurant in our hotel. Well, not only is it a three‑sided bar in which one side is the more typical 4‑foot stools and sitting areas of what a bar would be in any bar in the United States, we dropped the other two sides to the fact that somebody? A wheelchair would be able to roll right up to the bar and not only would they be comfortable with their companion who's sitting next to them, would also be comfortable ‑‑ we also ‑‑

[ Background talking ]

We also went one step further in that case, was we actually dropped the floor of the bar itself down 18 inches, so therefore the bartender, who is serving somebody in a wheelchair, would be at eye level with that person, not looking down, so we used every little attitude that we could to instill the sense of inclusivity. Now you go back to your original question: Well, how do we do it with the lending? And how do we do it with everything else? I don't know, we just keep doing it and then if we make a mistake or you need something, you let us know.

And we learn by doing for literally over 15 years.

For us, it was very cool to try to put up a YouTube video on something that we did, and of course, then we were trying to figure out: What do you do with captioning and everything else? And then we learned the technology and making sure that people had the ability to do some captioning with the videos that we were posting and such.

So again, that comes from you. As long as people don't try to play gotcha with us and say, hey, you forgot this, and we're going to tell the world how horrible you are, we're more than happy to make every accommodation that we didn't think of, and it only helps us learn and then it brings it to the Coalition so we can teach other CDFIs how to be more accommodating as well.

Goes all the way back, Caroline, to that question from the credit union about, how do they address a market for people with disabilities? Because we have a lot of work to do from the banking side and educational side on credit unions about: What questions are you allowed to ask? What are you allowed to ask so that you feel like you're helping but, you don't want to discriminate and be accused of ableism. Common sense will dictate in this whole environment, and if the attitude is there to do the right thing, even if you don't do the right thing, but if your attempt is to do the right thing, we will always support CDFIs who are trying to do the right thing, and from anybody on the asking side, we then just say: Hey, be good partners and teach. It's your job to teach just as much as it is for us to learn.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Thanks, Charlie. I think that's a great point around we're all trying to do our best and sometimes we don't know what we don't know, and it's only when it's brought to our attention that we can do something about it and we certainly found that at NDI, by doing webinars and other series. It really helps us learn as well how to try to make sure we're accessible as possible knowing that we're not perfect and always wanting to learn so that was a great answer.

I don't know if this is something that falls into your domain but I'll ask it and if not we can take it offline but someone says, I'm interested in pursuing worker owned businesses, worker cooperatives because they really give people a chance to maintain control over all aspects of their lives, self‑employment together. This model has a ton of benefits and I wonder if you have been exploring this. If not, is it something that you might be interested in supporting?

>> CHARLES HAMMERMAN: Not only that but I'd love to take that offline as well because the examples I'm going to give are realtime. The hardware store we put up on the screen, yes, we brought DOF's money to the table and invested in it, but the idea was not for us to run a hardware store for the rest of our existence. We actually brought in local business owners to then take it over from us, and then now own it and operate it, which they've been doing for now two years. And actually more profitably than when we did it because we're not retail hardware people. But we got the ‑‑ we lit the fire and we let somebody else sort of run with it at that point.

We're planning, we literally are in the throes of discussions on doing the same with the hotel, and we did discuss a cooperative model, so I would love to take that discussion offline.

We have, believe it or not, we've done a cooperative model on housing, meaning that families who had young adults with autism, rather than try to own a house through a service provider or own a house through some format of a Partnership, created a cooperative and did it that way. So we're very fond of that. There are some really fascinating CDFIs especially the New England cooperative Partnership up in New Hampshire that has been doing this kind of work for many years so yeah, CDFIs are a great playground for cooperatives and on the employment side, we love that story.

So, yeah, again, hate to punt it from this conversation to another conversation, but we would love to have that conversation throughout the Coalition, as well, because we love that story.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Perfect. And we can make sure that that connection happens after the event today.

We still have more questions coming in if you can just bear with it, Charlie. You're doing such a great job. This is another one from a CDFI. As a CDFI, IFF has developed accessible housing in the state of Illinois through our home first development function and are looking at a project co‑located with access to healthy food, bear with me a second, retail and access to transit. Would you be open to connecting so that we can learn from your experiences?

>> CHARLES HAMMERMAN: So that is fantastic question, and for my colleague from IFF who was ever on and is asking that question, all they need to do is go ask their colleague, Lisa Williams, at IFF, who worked with us on the Coalition. She just dropped off the Board, and the fact is that ‑‑ and we've been working in Partnership with IFF literally since the day we opened the doors in 2008.

So the answer is a loud and resounding: Yes. Obviously we can connect offline. If you can in the chat, maybe Robbie, I don't know who asked that question but if somebody can send that person my direct email to that person, and please follow up with me directly and we'll get that conversation started, but for all my CDFI colleagues on this call, again, I beg, beg, beg, that you don't understand how rich this Coalition is that we've created, and the beautiful piece of the Coalition, I'm going to do one marketing part right now, is that we are very much in the throes of next‑generation of leadership at the Coalition. So let me explain a couple initiatives that weave created at the Coalition for CDFIs.

Regardless of the fact that I'm the President and CEO of DOF and I happen to be the Chair of the Coalition right now, only because the previous Chair retired and I clearly do not plan to be the Chair. We are going to try to move that into a person who self identifies with a disability who works as a CDFI but what we did create on a networking standpoint, for CDFI employees was their own professional network so I being a parent, I guess I don't know if we described that at the beginning Caroline but for those who don't know I'm a parent of a 33‑year‑old child with cerebral palsy, that's not who this network is meant for. We created sort of a subgroup of the group and you don't have to be a CEO and you don't have to be in the C‑suite. We want any person who self‑identifies with a disability to feel comfortable within the CDFI field, and this goes for the credit unions, as well and such, that there's this safe place to have these conversations, and therefore, the Treasurer of our Board, who manages that little professional network, is able to then bring back to us as a Board and say hey, I want to do this initiative. We need to be more sensitive and then for us as CDFIs to bring it back to OFN and the greater, broader group to basically make sure that we're being sensitive and providing resources to employees who have self‑identified with disabilities.

So that's one aspect of the Coalition that we just started this past year and it's already sort of growing and doing really well. I would also tell you that again like this, we do a lot of webinars, and Caroline explained that NDFC did the first webinar in this series. I guess good first impressions and I don't know whether they saved the best for last or the bottom of the class for the last, but I guess I'm bringing up the rear.

And it really is a very powerful ‑‑ we really worked hard to make sure that this was not the Charlie Hammerman or DOF was cornering the market on this subject matter. We wanted to prove to the CDFI fund, we wanted to prove to OFN, to JP Morgan Chase, to anybody else listening, like, hey, it's not just one organization. It's multiple organizations, very large ones like IFF who have been doing great work for many, many years and even new ones, or as we're saying sort of credit unions who have sort of coming into the fold.

So great question, and we're very excited for where the future's going to go here.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Wonderful. I'm just lacking through. We had some specific questions that we'll be linking up with people after the webinar.

>> CHARLES HAMMERMAN: Just for DOF's purposes, what's on the screen now believe it or not works. I know info@ seems like it's not very personal. We created that literally 10 to 12 years ago, because we were growing so rapidly that we created a way for everyone to synthesize and centralize their inquiries and questions.

I promise everybody on this webinar, it is not a black hole. It doesn't go somewhere never to be heard from again. Rather, it's a much more efficient way for us to look at the questions and the inquiries in an organized manner. There's somebody on our staff at a very senior level who gets that email, and then as I said will parse that email out to Robbie and myself. We review those. I would say be patient in terms of a response, probably no more than a week, but if it gets to us quickly enough, we ‑‑ once we get it, it responds in about 24 hours or so.

So that's the best way to coordinate with DOF. Sorry to tell all of you, we had very intense conversations back in 2008 about social media, and DOF has begged off of social media. We never have had Facebook or Twitter or anything else. We do use LinkedIn in terms of trying to get a profile out, and with that actually I'll use a few minutes to explain something we're going to launch on LinkedIn probably later this afternoon, and I don't know if that was shared yet with everybody in the chat.

But we are literally launching today a pitch competition that we are going to put through LinkedIn, and then a bunch of other different avenues, and everybody on, I think they're receiving this on the chat right now. 100% if you're a small business or you feel you qualify for this competition, please feel free to apply. Also feel free, all my CDFI compatriots, feel free, anybody can get this out. Obviously we're going to share it with NDI for them to get it out to the network.

We did create an application for about $100, just because there is going to be a huge administrative expense on our side to go through all of the applications, but at the end of the day, this competition is going to make ‑‑ go back to our 6 areas, focus areas. There will be at least up to $50,000 being granted on a non‑dilutive, meaning if it's shares or a company, this will be grant money. This will not be an investment, up to $50,000. A competition that we will then hold in honor of our 15th anniversary of DOF in October. This program and the applications will be open for one month from May 2nd to June 2nd, and then we're going to, with the hope that we're going to get hundreds if not thousands of responses.

We will spend the summer whittling that down to our finalists, and then hold the actual pitch competition October 23rd here in Long Island, and all the details are now going to be shared with everybody.

So please get the word out. This is going to be very exciting. We hope that we can attract additional sponsorship, and therefore we will grow the 50,000 to larger grants, but at this point, that's what we're going to be guaranteeing as part of this competition.

And if anyone has specific questions, it looks like we still have about 15 minutes or so on this webinar, don't be afraid to ask, because we're very excited by this, and once we get off of this webinar, Robbie and I are going to launch this on LinkedIn.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: That sounds amazing, Charlie. I look forward to clicking on the link and we'll definitely share it here at NDI far and wide.

And so sort of last question really before we wrap up with some of the NDI finishing slides, is really thinking around that startup. So what advice do you have for an entrepreneur who's at pre‑revenue, who's trying to establish the business? How can they really sort of perhaps take those early steps? You're saying that really they need to get stuff in place before DOF is really the right place for them but do you have advice from things you've seen over the years, a parting end comment that can really help our entrepreneurs think about that very beginning stage of moving and growing their business?

>> CHARLES HAMMERMAN: Sure. I started a CDFI, I didn't even know how to spell CDFI back in 2006 and '7. I went to law school and got a law degree, worked on Wall Street 12 years, still didn't know what a CDFI with us, and the first word that was given back to me every time I would have a conversation back in 2006‑7 and when we launched in 2008, was passion. Now, just because you have a disability, doesn't mean that you know what you're doing or you're a nice person, or et cetera, et cetera. You don't get benefit points out of it.

In fact, it's the reverse, right? Everybody who has a disability who's an entrepreneur is going to tell me that there's 42 extra hurdles that they're gonna have to go through than other people.

Yes, I acknowledge that, and what we don't acknowledge is any whining about it, okay? It's reality. It's the case. What you're going to say to CDFIs like myself and my colleagues on the call are: Thank you. Because we've been trying to beat the drum for so long to tell mainstream finance, to tell mainstream society that people with disabilities can be entrepreneurs, can run their own businesses. Obviously setting aside all the public policy issues about living independently, educating ‑‑ being educated, everything else.

Well, what we like to pitch, and we have a whole different slide set which I was not going to use for this webinar because I don't need to teach you Disability 101. We have a whole different slide set where we do disability basics for banks, for financial institutions, for private equity firms, for government, just to say: Hey, look, you know, did you ever think you were going to see every commercial or every sitcom or every Netflix or anything else represent people with disabilities as much as it was? We were talking about that in 2006, and here it's now 2023, and a lot of that's being taken for granted in the media. And aren't we thrilled about that? Okay, aren't we thrilled about the fact that at least there's acceptance?

Aren't we thrilled and we've had a lot of recent conversations about Simone Biles and mental illness. The fact you have is an Olympic athlete in the middle of the Olympics willing to talk about and be public about something that's hidden like mental illness, and her issues. And now all of a sudden it's accepted conversation.

So a lot of the attitudes have started to shift for all of you who would like to say: All right, I'm disabled. I self‑identify. I want to run a business. I'm not ready maybe financially yet but I am in terms of my passion, in terms of my business plan, and here we go. Okay?

Again from that standpoint, if you're not ready yet, then get yourself ready from the standpoint of educate yourself as much as possible. Let's assume you're at that stage, but it's still your early, early stage, you're not ready for DOF financing. Clearly if you have not heard of the world of accelerators or startup programs, there are a whole host of them, and we can have access to them and are able and NDI clearly puts some of those folks, like 2Gether‑International, who's in the cohort of NDI for this program, and others, there's an accelerator program that's just focused on autism, and that's called Multiple, so there are a whole bunch of places you can go to sort of get started and be very, very early stage.

But at the same time, you have to be organized and you have to know your product better and your business and everything better than the person you're talking to, and again, passion becomes the big play. So again, very cliché, maybe, but it's the reality and the reality is that people in today's society, with post‑COVID, Zooms and no one niece the office, and it's very hard to keep people ‑‑ how do you get your email to the front of somebody's email box? And how do you get it out of spam? And how do you get their attention for more than 10 seconds or 10 minutes or whatever?

Well, you're gonna have to be smart about it from a marketing standpoint. Know your stuff, and make sure that your audience knows why you're talking to them, and why you think it's going to be a perfect fit in terms of what's going on. So it's a challenge. Don't get frustrated. As I said, we've been at this for a very long time in a field we knew nothing about, and it's a field that really didn't understand disabilities, so we were hoping to put community development together with disabilities, not be the only player doing it, and I'd like to say, I don't want to say "mission accomplished," because there's so much more work to do, but I'm telling you right now, we've accomplished a lot in 15 years, and there's plenty more to do going forward.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Thank you. And you're such a good salesman that actually we've had a question in the box that lots of people then wanted to know as well is: How can we get the training he's speaking of right now for our CDFIs? You were talking about training other CDFIs on disability sensitivity. We have some takers so is there a way that they can ‑‑

>> CHARLES HAMMERMAN: Yeah, so again, I'm sorry to default but it's because we've created this amazing organization so you're going to reach out to the Coalition. Pam Porter is our Executive Director, and you just reach out. In fact, she and I speak every Wednesday at 9:00 in the morning Eastern so she and I will be talking tomorrow.

Bombard her, and the fact is, we've already created the curriculum. We spent a year with the CDFI Fund, with a grant from Treasury Department, to create all this curriculum. We have amazing curriculum already. Not only that, but we have an amazing membership, so therefore let's assume it's financial literacy. If any of you out there are doing consumer lending or trying to teach people literally how to open up a checking account, how to open up a savings account, and you want to understand how to deal with that from a disability standpoint, we already have all of that curriculum. Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Fund has all that curriculum done free of charge, ready to go and you don't have to reinvent it all and they will help you to learn how, to a teach the teacher kind of thing. Native CDFIs, maybe there are those on the call today that serve Native communities, we are very well connected.

I am a member, DOF is a member, of the Native CDFI Coalition. We work very closely with them and again we're more than happy. Do not reinvent the wheel. We have worked really hard at creating this curriculum. Doesn't mean we can't add to it and that's what we love having new members for but please if you want more education on this, we've got it.

I'll also tell you that the CDFI Coalition is considering applying to become certified as a CDFI to do technical assistance, not to do lend bug to do technical assistance and I would also tell you, I guess I can be public about it because we got the money. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in addition to the JP Morgan Chase Foundation co‑sponsor the Disability Finance Coalition to do teach‑the‑teacher. So we just received a nice grant that will go on the next 3 years where it's capacity building. It's not capacity for the Coalition. It's capacity for its members.

So all of those inquiries are lining up perfectly to what we're doing anyway, and we'd love to hear from you.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Wonderful. Just a reminder, Pam Porter was actually our speaker on our very first CDFI series back in fab wear and you'll have the link that you can go and watch that as well, just to do that top and tail, as Charlie was saying.

And then may very, very last question. Someone asked, do you have to be an actual CDFI to join the Coalition? Or can anyone join it?

>> CHARLES HAMMERMAN: No. And in fact, so on the Coalition side, the only differentiating way we made it was for Board members, meaning that you have to be a CDFI, and not necessarily a certified CDFI. So there are CDFIs who are still waiting for certification, and they definitely cannot only be a member but they can be connected with us and we have a couple of those on our Board who are of course waiting for this moratorium to open up, and they are very active CDFIs, even though they're not traditionally certified.

Outside of CDFIs, we have opened up the membership to people with disabilities who self‑identify with disabilities, financial institutions, not‑for‑profits. We really opened it up. Obviously we don't want rabble‑rousers, we want people who are there because they want to work in this field but no it's open and has always been open and especially for that one question for ‑‑ that was asked about geographies that don't get served by CDFIs, we definitely want to hear from you, because if we feel there are pockets in the United States that could use some assistance, that's even more beneficial to us to have you as members of the Coalition because we're on Capitol Hill all the time talking to Congresspeople and Senators, because it doesn't matter about Republican or Democrat. They all want CDFIs to serve their jurisdiction, their constituency, so they don't care about Republicans. They just want to know that their constituents are being served, and therefore we want to hear much, much more about even non‑CDFIs. What are you doing locally? You could be affordable housing developer. You could be a small business owner, whatever. It doesn't matter.

Because if you're local and we're not in your community, well, that's better because you act now as an Ambassador to what we're doing and we can help you and you can help us.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: I'll just say we need to end, but you've got so much in the chat saying that people are going to be joining the Coalition so you've done a wonderful job of really promoting it, so we've had at least three or four CDFIs who as we're speaking are about to join so I just want to take this time, Charlie, to thank you so much for such a wonderful presentation, but more answering the questions and really obviously hitting a nerve with our audience today.

So thank you so much for joining us.

>> CHARLES HAMMERMAN: Thank you all. Thanks for your attention.

>> CAROLINE BOLAS: Just to close out, we're just going to provide bit of information around some upcoming webinars. The next one is tomorrow, looking at social media accessibility, presented by Results One.

The next week we have a wonderful presentation by Hello Alice really looking at how you can make sure the grant‑writing you're doing is impactful. So that pro tips grant writing really how you can tell your story, how you can make sure you're successful, putting all that effort into writing a grant but hopefully making sure you're successful.

That's taking place on May the 9th ‑‑ so May the 10th, excuse me May the 10th. And then on May the 17th, we have Business Structure and Business Plan presented by Griffin‑Hammis Associates. And then lastly for now, we have one on June the 7th, another Accessibility: Looking at Creating Accessible PDFs, again presented by Results One. All of these are 2:00 to 3:30. All start at 2:00 and most are 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. Eastern time. We'd love you to join and we'll send out those links so that you can find it but it's also on our website that you can join up and register.

Next slide.

Some of you here today may be thinking, I really want to start a business or I have a business, I don't know where to grow next, I want to grow it, I want to get ready to access capital as Charlie was talking about. We have a lot of information on our website. Remember, that's disability small business.org.

Or you can email our community navigator, Ruth Chavez, rchavez@NDI‑inc.org.

We're running a cohort looking at financial health topics, and we will have a new cohort starting this summer. We are still accepting applications for that, so feel free to email me. Caroline Bolas. That's cbolas@NDI.inc.org to find out more information.

You can find a whole lot of information, inspirational, motivational content at our streaming TV channel. You can find this at the website www.disabilityowned.com.

And then if you're trying to access training, mentoring, business coaching, grant opportunities, we have a great Partnership with Verizon small business digital ready. We will make sure you have the link that you can actually register, and then you will be able to find out how you can get that self‑paced learning and apply for grants.

And then hopefully you're already on our mailing list but if not, we'd love to have it so you can stay in the know and find out about future events.

Next slide.

And then finally, just want to introduce you to our team, Nikki Powis is our Director. Ruth we've talked about and myself and shout‑out to Lexi Jones, or small business Project Coordinator who has been working behind the scenes to really bring us this series of webinars and make it all run smoothly.

So with that, we are at time, at 3:30. Thank you all so much for joining us for this webinar, for our previous webinars. We hope you found the information useful. Get in touch if we can help in any way, but anyway, have a great rest of your day, and take care. Thank you.

[ End of session ]