

Meeting Minutes
MEDA RLF Working Group Meeting
Dial in: 712.432.0175 pin 217279
9/20/2016
10:00 am

Conference Call Attendees:

Tiffany Melby, Sammie Chagnon, Kelsey Bates (Great Northern), Jillann Knutson (Beartooth RC&D), Carolyn Jones, Karen Sweeney, John Schneeberger, Brent Donnelly, Steve Clairmont, Anne Pichette, and Danielle Williams

Additions/Changes to Agenda:

Last Meeting Minutes: Posted on [RLF Working Group Homepage](#)

Questions/Discussion:

- IRP Funding
 - Brent gave a general overview of the IRP and RMAT revolving loan programs
 - IRP – 30-year term at 1% interest to establish an RLF. Funding is open to nonprofits and tribes; RMAT – 20 year term 2% interest but you can also get an annual technical assistance grant based on the funding availability for TA. RMAT funds are for micro borrowers who need capital of \$50,000 or less
 - Montana is one of the top 3 or 4 states in the nation for IRP loan out rate
 - If looking to apply for additional funding: this year there were 17.5 million dollars available for lending; funds are awarded quarterly and are submitted for national competition after applications are submitted to the state. During the final quarter is when most of the funds are awarded; there is currently 8.5 million available for funding and, in the last quarter, out of the funded applications, the highest score was 205 and lowest was 140 points. The scoring criteria is specified in the application.
 - RMAT program had 11.5 million available this year and there will probably be about 3.7 million left available by the end of the year
 - LINC reporting system – had problems doing basic math in the beginning. The system is working better now and fund balances should be correct. There is a column on the Fund Balance Report for a percentage of ultimate recipient data that has unreliable calculations, but the state offices are aware of it and do not use that data from the report.
 - Tiffany asked about making sure that the browser and settings need to be correct in order to get LINC to work properly. Brent said that LINC does not work well with the more recent versions of internet explorer, so if people are having problems, they should let the local office, or Brent, know. Tiffany said that some settings within internet explorer were not correct when her computer updated –

she called the help desk and they were able to walk her through steps to fix it. Brent also said that you can send a screenshot to him, and he can get in touch with Maggie at their office who can help with system issues.

- There was a question about whether there are plans to update LINC since internet explorer is no longer supported by Microsoft. Do people need to worry about updating computers and not being able to access LINC? Brent said that, at the national level, they are discussing doing upgrades but that those upgrades are very expensive, and there is no set date for making them.
- Tiffany said that in other browsers, you can go into settings and then click “open window in internet explorer” and it should work properly that way.
- Purpose for LINC is to understand the health of intermediary portfolios; if you are having trouble with fund balance or other issues, let Brent or the local office know right away so that it can get taken care of to prevent larger issues later on
- Steve had talked to Brent in the spring and was wondering if there were any changes in the IRP funds if the lender is leasing. Brent got an informal thumbs up to submit a proposal and will talk to Steve further.
- Tiffany asked, if we request IRP funding, does the organization have to have the first round of ultimate recipients identified at that time? Brent said that you need to identify that you have demand for the funds. The application may compete for funding for 4 consecutive quarters, so some identified recipients may find funding elsewhere during that time. While you are not required to lend to those specific borrowers you still have to show that the funding is in demand. You must also show that your current funds are used up.
- Kelsey asked, if you want more funding, do you have to have 80% of your current funds loaned out to be awarded additional funding? There is a difference between first round funding and revolved funding. Once revolved, there isn't a percentage of loan out, you just have to prove demand. For un-revolved funds, it is an 80% loan out rate.
- Brent stated that, generally, the IRP program has fared very well in MT. Of the applications he has seen, they were all scored well and MT has been successful in getting a high percentage of applications funded.
- Brent mentioned that USDA has a loan guarantee program and that Rural Energy for America has a loan guarantee program. USDA will partner with banks on larger projects. If lenders are doing outreach to banks, the local USDA office or Brent would be willing to come along to talk about the different USDA funding/guarantee options.
- Brent also mentioned that the MT Board of Investments has some funding still available for match for IRP funding, and Doug is the one to talk to at MT BOI.

Topics for next meeting:

Debra with CDBG – funds status

Next Meeting: October 18th at 10am on the conference call line