

Iowa Able Liaison Report

Kimberly Stephens, Nov 2018

Need: Iowa Able Foundation provides aging Iowans and Iowans with disabilities an accessible borrowing option. Ninety percent of their borrowers are below the poverty line. They offer three different programs. One is loans to make homes and vehicles handicapped accessible. A second is business loans for the disabled, providing help with the business plan and providing a network of support. The third is their credit builder program, a \$500 loan to establish a credit score. The portion of their program that they ask funds from ASSET is for their financial education program, which is offered for free.

Strengths of the Program: A new Executive Director has been chosen, alongside the Finance Director. A couple key partnerships help their clients, one is with Banker's Trust, which automatically gives a savings account to each of their clients. A second partnership is with Easter Seals that help with acquiring hearing aids and ramps.

There are currently 61 active loans. Delinquency rates are very low for these loans, and adjustments can be made when clients have a need. Feedback from former clients is almost entirely positive. Most express gratitude and renewed hope, Iowa Able offers them a last chance loan opportunity so they can avoid payday lenders. Further, the Financial Coaching program receives 80-90% high marks and many who receive the coaching are able to then go on and apply for a loan through the foundation.

Weaknesses of the Program: With the new Executive Director, they are currently holding off on expansion until a better analysis of needs can be created. The Board of Directors is working toward getting a strategic plan back on line and looking for new fundraising plans.

Iowa Able remains a relatively unknown entity and may be confused with the Able Account, a different program.

General Assessment: This program provides last chance loans and financial coaching for people who may otherwise have no other choice than to go to a pay day lender. These services go toward promoting self sufficiency among older and disabled Iowans, allowing them to either fit their homes to accommodate their handicaps, build credit, or start a business. The financial coaching that is provided, and which is the ASSET funded portion, helps to ensure the programs' successes.

Future Outlook: The future outlook is positive for the current program, however the Agency recognizes that it needs to reassess strategic planning under the new Executive Director.