

What is “Weed and Seed”?

The US Department of Justice Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO) launched Weed and Seed in the early 1990s as a strategy to prevent, control and reduce violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in targeted high-crime neighborhoods across the country. The strategy is to “weed out” crime through enforcement and community policing while “seeding” the sites with human services that lead to neighborhood revitalization. Today there are more than 320 sites across the country, ranging in size from several city blocks to 15 square miles, with populations ranging from 3,000 to 50,000.



At the local level, Weed and Seed sites are generally chaired by municipal authorities, such as a city mayor or other official. Steering committees typically include local, state and federal law enforcement officials plus a wide variety of community development organizations dedicated to neighborhood revitalization. Sites that emphasize asset-building programs often form partnerships with financial institutions that may support the program with small grants or become more directly involved by providing financial education or affordable mortgage loans to residents of the community. Most Weed and Seed sites partner with multiple financial institutions, including both banks and credit unions.

How do IDAs fit into Weed and Seed?

In recent years, many Weed and Seed sites have focused on asset-building initiatives to increase the economic stability of their communities. Most sites now incorporate Volunteers in Tax Assistance (VITA) and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) programs, financial education, or homebuyer assistance into their strategy, and some are already implementing Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). The new Weed and Seed IDA Demonstration Project is focused specifically on homeownership IDAs to test the impact of a concentrated program on community stability and revitalization.

What is the role of the technical assistance provider?

The National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions is providing technical assistance to Weed and Seed to help them design their IDA programs and, if appropriate, apply for grants through the OCS Assets for Independence (AFI) program. In 2005, CCDO asked all Weed and Seed sites that were interested in the IDA pilot project to submit Letters of Intent to participate. Thirty-eight sites responded and 15 sites were selected to participate in this pilot effort. The Federation has provided technical assistance to participating sites, of which 8 have applied for AFI grants, 3 more have established partnerships with existing IDA programs, and 4 sites are currently engaged in the design process.



National Federation of
Community Development
Credit Unions

Weed and Seed IDA Demonstration Project



About the Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO)

The mission of CCDO is to work with local communities to design strategies for deterring crime, promoting economic growth, and enhancing quality of life. CCDO develops, evaluates, and implements policies that serve as models for other national community capacity development efforts and provides counseling for federal, state, and local government agencies and private sector clients on a variety of justice-related community issues. CCDO provides direction, oversight, and guidance for **Weed and Seed**, and works with bureaus and program offices in the Office of Justice Programs to ensure the special needs and programs of American Indian and Alaska Native communities are incorporated in products and services.

CCDO used to be called the Executive Office of Weed and Seed. In 2004, the office changed its name to better reflect its focused efforts on partnerships, American Indian/Alaska Native issues, and reentry. CCDO is a program office within the Office of Justice Programs in the U.S. Department of Justice. The Office of the Assistant Attorney General oversees the Office of Justice Programs.

About the National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions

The Federation represents a network of 220 community development credit unions (CDCUs) serving more than 900,000 members in low-income communities across the country. The Federation has a decade of experience with IDA research, training, technical assistance, fundraising, and partnership with other leading organizations in the IDA field. Currently more than fifty CDCUs have IDA programs with more than 1,000 IDA accounts and 400 IDA graduates to date. The Federation's Capitalization Program has provided IDA matching grants to 36 CDCUs across the country, using the Federation's own net worth to establish the program, and raising additional match funds from the **Ford Foundation**, the **New York Community Trust**, and the U.S. Treasury **Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund**. Since 1997 the Federation's Americorps*VISTA program has deployed more than 100 VISTA volunteers to develop IDA programs in 43 CDCUs.

The Federation is also a leading provider of education and training in community development finance. The Federation's **CDCU Institute™** is the only advanced business management curriculum designed specifically for board members and staff of credit unions serving low-income and minority communities. Since 2002, the Federation's *Each One, Teach Many* financial literacy instructor training program has trained 650 financial literacy instructors who have, in turn, delivered financial literacy courses to more than 10,000 residents of low-income communities in 26 states across the country.

National Federation of
Community Development
Credit Unions
www.cdcu.coop

For more information

Department of Justice
Community Capacity
Development Office
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo