

Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, US Department of the Treasury

Resources and Materials on Reaching the Unbanked

[Advisory letter AL 2001-1](#) -- The OCC provides national banks with information on the types of financial literacy programs that have been undertaken by banks and aspects of those programs that have been most important to their success.

[Individual Development Accounts: An Asset Building Product for Lower-Income Consumers \(PDF 582KB\)](#) (February 2005) Abstract - This edition of *Insights* examines Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) as a tool for banks and other financial institutions to encourage lower-income persons and families to save money and thus build assets for particular financial goals. It describes why banks offer IDAs, shows how banks are involved with IDAs, and addresses barriers to the growth of IDA products. The information presented here was obtained from a variety of sources including financial institutions, IDA policymakers, nonprofit service providers, and program funders. Several hundred banks participate in IDA programs which can receive positive consideration under the Community Reinvestment Act. Appendix 1 of the *Insights* paper contains a resource guide for banks considering participation in an IDA program.

[Reaching Minority Markets: Community Bank Strategies \(PDF 293KB\)](#) (November 2006) Abstract: The growth of minority populations and projected increases in their buying power provide significant opportunities for retail growth by financial institutions. This edition of *Insights* examines selected strategies being used by community banks to target specific minority markets in the United States, the impact of these strategies on bringing unbanked consumers into the banking system, and some risks and regulatory considerations associated with each strategy.

[Payroll Cards: An Innovative Product for Reaching the Unbanked and Underbanked \(PDF 248KB\)](#) (June 2005) Abstract: This edition of *Insights* examines the growth of payroll cards and their potential for use by national banks to attract the nearly 10 million unbanked households into the financial mainstream. Some employers offer this prepaid debit card to employees in place of a check to distribute wages. Employers can lower internal costs by using the card since it enables them to avoid the costs of producing and distributing checks, as well as dealing with lost and stolen checks. Payroll cards can serve as an introductory financial product for consumers who do not want to manage a checking account, but want the combined benefits of direct deposit and a nationally branded debit card.

[Individual Development Accounts: An Asset Building Product for Lower-Income Consumers \(PDF 581KB\)](#) (February 2005) Abstract: This edition of *Insights* examines Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) as a tool for banks and other financial institutions to encourage lower-income persons and families to save money and thus build assets for particular financial goals. It describes why banks offer IDAs, shows how banks are involved with IDAs, and addresses barriers to the growth of IDA products. The information presented here was obtained from a variety of sources including financial institutions, IDA policymakers, nonprofit service providers, and program funders. Several hundred banks participate in IDA programs which can receive positive consideration under the Community Reinvestment Act. Appendix 1 of the *Insights* paper contains a resource guide for banks considering participation in an IDA program.

[Remittances: A Gateway to Banking for Unbanked Immigrants \(PDF 229KB\)](#) (September 2004) Abstract: This edition of *Insights* examines the role of banks in providing money transfer

services and reviews the goals of banks in offering these products. It describes how banks can use these products to attract unbanked immigrants into the banking system and become providers of a variety of financial products and services that immigrants can use. It addresses some of the key risks and regulatory issues presented by bank involvement in these products, as well as structural and cultural barriers to the growth of bank remittance products. Although immigrants in the U.S. remit funds to countries throughout the world, this analysis addresses the Mexican market because it is the largest and where banks have focused most of their attention.

[The Power of Plastic: How Banks are Using Technology to Reach the Unbanked](#) (Fall 2004) focuses on how depository institutions are using stored value cards, the Internet, and other technology-driven products to provide financial services to the 10 million unbanked households in the United States. [Click here for PDF version](#) (PDF 1.5MB)

[Focus on Retail Financial Services to Underserved Communities](#) (PDF 420KB) (Fall 2000)

[Methodological Issues in Surveying the Unbanked Population in Urban Areas](#) (1998) The OCC sponsored a survey of financial activities and attitudes to better understand why million of adults in the United States rarely, if ever, conduct their regular financial activities, particularly savings and transaction activities through banks. The survey solutions identified in this paper should facilitate market research efforts to improve financial access for traditionally unbanked individuals.

[Interagency Interpretive Guidance on Providing Banking Services to Money Services Businesses Operating in the United States](#) (April 26, 2005) The OCC and other federal banking agencies and the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network provide guidance to clarify further the requirements of the Bank Secrecy Act and its implementing regulations for banking organizations when providing banking services to money services businesses operating in the United States.

Article Archive: Transaction Account Products Targeting the Unbanked

[IDAs: An Asset Building Product for Lower Income Consumers](#) *Community Developments Insights* February 2005

[IDAs: Savings Incentives to Build Wealth](#) *Community Developments* Fall 2004

[Individual Development Accounts](#) *Community Developments* Fact Sheet

[Remittances: A Gateway to Banking for Unbanked Immigrants](#) *Community Developments Insights* September 2004

[How Citibank's New Services Help Consumers in the United States and Mexico](#) *Community Developments* Fall 2004

[Services and Technology: CRA Considerations](#) *Community Developments* Fall 2004

[For Ongoing Payments, Plastic Outperforms Paper](#) *Community Developments* Fall 2004

[Electronic Transfer Accounts: A Great Way to Reach Unbanked Federal Benefit Recipients](#) *Community Developments* Fall 2004

[Payroll Cards: An Innovative Product for Reaching the Unbanked and Underbanked](#) *Community Developments Insights* June 2005

[Plastic Goes to Sea](#) *Community Developments* Fall 2004

[Plastic Assets: Using Store Value Cards to Build Wealth](#) *Community Developments* Fall 2004

Important OCC Websites:

OCC Home Page - - <http://www.occ.treas.gov/index.htm>

OCC's Community Affairs web page - - <http://www.occ.treas.gov/cdd/commfoc.htm>

OCC's Financial Literacy web directory - - <http://www.occ.treas.gov/cdd/finlitresdir.htm>

OCC's Community Affairs publications and resource materials - - <http://www.occ.treas.gov/cdd/resource.htm>

OCC's Community Affairs list service - - <http://www.occ.treas.gov/canewslistserv.htm>

OCC's HelpWithMyBank.gov web page - - Answers and Solutions for Customers of National Banks <http://www.helpwithmybank.gov/>

OCC's Community Affairs Contacts - - <http://www.occ.gov/cdd/contacts.htm>