

Program Guide

The Streamlined CDFI Certification Application for Qualifying LID Credit Unions

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Program Overview

NCUA – CDFI Fund Partnership

On January 21, 2016, the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) and the U.S. Treasury Department’s Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund entered into an agreement to streamline the application process for qualifying low-income credit unions to become certified as CDFIs.

In this streamlined application process, NCUA analyzes a low-income credit union’s products and services and other indicators showing the likelihood it will qualify for certification. The credit union must submit data to NCUA on its loan originations and identify its target market. If the credit union is qualified, NCUA will provide an application form and the data necessary to complete it. Credit unions are then required to complete the application and forward to CDFI for the final determination of the certification.

Credit unions that obtain CDFI certification can access training and competitive award programs provided by the CDFI Fund. These resources enhance credit unions capacity to provide underserved communities with access to safe and affordable financial services.

Transition: Pilot Project to Program

The Streamlined CDFI Certification Application for Qualifying Low Income Designated Credit Unions (referred to as “the streamlined certification application”) was developed in 2016 as a pilot project between the NCUA and CDFI Fund. Select credit unions were invited to participate in this pilot in order to collect and gather results for a full-scale solution.

NCUA began transitioning this pilot project into a full-scale program in December 2016. The streamlined certification application process is now available to all low income designated credit union’s (LICU) interested in becoming a CDFI.

Low income credit unions must consider the following to determine whether or not they should submit data for approval to use the CDFI streamlined application:

Credit unions should determine if they are eligible by meeting the “General Requirements” listed below. Next, credit unions should ensure that they can provide the required data files listed in the “Data Requirements” section. Lastly, credit unions should consider if their 2016 loan activity will qualify according to the “Results of the Geocode Analysis” section. Credit union’s that do not meet the general requirements will not have their files reviewed.

Credit unions that do not meet the above are encouraged to apply through CDFI’s standard CDFI application.

2017 Invitation Rounds for Interested LICUs

The streamlined certification application program will consist of three invitation rounds every year. Each interested LICU may participate in the program only once a year. NCUA will determine and identify the LICUs that qualify to use the streamlined certification application during each period. LICUs that **do not** qualify may still obtain a CDFI certification through the standard application available through the CDFI Fund.

Below are the invitation rounds for interested LICUs for 2017.

Invitation Rounds		
Round #	Start Date*	End Date*
1	Monday, February 13	Friday, March 17
2	Monday, May 1	Friday, May 26
3	Monday, August 7	Friday, September 1

**Each Invitation Round will open at 8am EST and close at 5pm EST.*

Program Details

Details about the streamlined certification application program will be explained in a Q&A format. The questions are divided into four sections: *general requirements, data requirements, geocode analysis, and the results of the geocode analysis.*

General Requirements

I. Who is eligible to participate?

To participate in the streamlined certification application program, a credit union must meet ALL of the following requirements:

- Be insured by NCUA; and
- Be designated as a low-income credit union by NCUA or a similar State designation confirmed by NCUA.
- Provide at least one of the following Development Programs & Services according to the most recent 5300 call report: *Financial Counseling, Financial Education, Financial Literacy Workshops, In-School Branches, and First-Time Homebuyer Program.*

II. Do I need to contact my examiner to participate?

You are encouraged to communicate with your examiner if you plan to participate in the program.

III. How can I participate in the program?

If you want to participate in the streamlined certification application program, you must complete an electronic participation questionnaire during one of the invitation rounds.

Before completing the questionnaire, please go through all of the program details and instructions. This will ensure that you have all of the necessary information required to participate. The URL link for the electronic participation questionnaire is located in the Program Instruction section of this document.

Data Requirements

IV. Is there any data that I need to provide to NCUA?

Credit unions must provide their AIRES and off-system loan files for loans originated during the past fiscal year (**2016**).

V. How should I provide this data to NCUA?

Credit unions must email their AIRES loan files to OSCUICDFI@ncua.gov. All files must adhere to the AIRES Loan File structure as identified on pages 6-9 of [Letter NO. 03-CU-05](#). The file must be in Excel or .txt format. Failure to provide the correct format and content will result in the files being rejected without analysis. Detailed instructions indicating how to submit this data securely to NCUA is located in the Program Instruction section of this document.

VI. How will NCUA handle the personal identifiable information (PII) of my members?

NCUA will purge the PII data in the loan files prior to performing an analysis. The names of credit union members, member ID's, and social security numbers are expunged before an analysis is conducted on the loan files.

Geocode Analysis

VII. What will NCUA do with the data?

NCUA's Office of Small Credit Union Initiatives (OSCUI) will geocode each credit union's loan originations for the past fiscal year. The results of the geocode analysis will determine if your credit union is qualified to use the streamlined certification application.

VIII. How does NCUA's geocode analysis work?

NCUA's geocode analysis determines if your credit union generated a sufficient amount of loan activity to the eligible Target Markets (Investment Areas and Low-Income Targeted Population) in the streamlined certification application.

A credit union's loan activity is considered sufficient for the streamlined certification application if at least 60% of all its financial product activities are directed to at least one of the eligible Target Markets.

IX. How long does it typically take to complete a geocode analysis?

The geocode analysis may take up to 4 weeks to complete. The timeframe varies due to several factors such as the volume of financial transactions being geocoded. However, OSCUI aims to complete each analysis within 2 weeks.

Results of the Geocode Analysis

X. What does the result of the geocode analysis mean for my credit union?

The result of your credit union's geocode analysis determines if you qualify to use the streamlined certification application. There are three possible results: Qualified, Marginal, and Not Qualified. The meaning of each result is detailed below.

- a. Qualified: The credit union's loan activity to eligible Target Markets for all of its financial product activities exceeded 60%. These credit unions qualify to use the streamlined certification application.

- b. *Marginal: The credit union's loan activity to eligible Target Markets for all of its financial product activities is between 55% and 60%. These credit unions do not qualify to use the streamlined certification application. However, these credit unions are strong candidates for a CDFI certification and should submit the standard certification application.*

- c. *Not Qualified: The credit union's loan activity to eligible Target Markets for all of its financial product activities is less than 55%. These credit unions do not qualify to use the streamlined certification application. However, these credit unions are encouraged to submit the standard CDFI certification application.*

XI. How will I be notified of the geocode analysis results?

OSCUI will notify your credit union by email. If you qualify to use the streamlined certification application, NCUA will provide you with additional instructions to help you submit the application to the CDFI Fund.

XII. Where can I find out more information on the NCUA and CDFI Fund Certification Initiative?

[CDFI Certification - More Than One Way to Get There](#)

Program Instructions

This section is a step-by-step instruction guide to help credit unions navigate the process from start to finish.

Before proceeding to complete the participation questionnaire, please complete the following activities:

1. Prepare your AIRES loan files for 2016 loan originations according to the file structure identified on pages 6-9 of [Letter NO. 03-CU-05](#). The file must be in Excel or .txt format.
2. Register with www.zixcorp.com so you can provide the files to NCUA through a secure, encrypted solution.

Step 1 – Email your loan file to OSCUICDFI@ncua.gov using the following template for your subject line and body. Please ensure you are sending the message through ZixCorp's secure solution.

Subject: [Consent to CDFI Streamlined Application Geocode Analysis](#)

Body: Charter Number
 Credit Union Name
 Point of Contact Information

If you are unable to successfully register with ZixCorp, please send us an email at OSCUICDFI@ncua.gov using the following words as the subject line: [Request for ZixCorp E-mail Thread for OSCUI CDFI Program](#)

Step 2 – Complete the electronic participation questionnaire. Open the URL link below to access it:

[Electronic Participation Questionnaire - Streamlined Certification Application Program](#)

This completes the requirements to participate in the program. You will receive an email confirming that NCUA received your participation questionnaire.

If you have any issues, please contact our office at OSCUICDFI@ncua.gov.

The CDFI Fund's Contact Information

The CDFI Fund's helpdesk contact information for their various services is provided below. Please allow 48 to 72 hours for a response.

For questions that are programmatic in nature (e.g. questions about the certification criteria or how to answer a specific question), e-mail ccme@cdfi.treas.gov.

For questions that are technical and related to using AMIS and the myCDFI Fund system, in particular questions regarding AMIS accounts (e.g. I can't get into my AMIS account, or I'm having technical trouble submitting my CDFI certification application), email amis@cdfi.treas.gov.

The AMIS specific helpdesk contact info and AMIS instruction manuals on the CDFI Fund website are available on this link: <https://amis.cdfifund.gov/s/AMISHome>.

For non-AMIS technical issues and questions, email ithelpdesk@cdfi.treas.gov.

For questions that are related to the Funding Programs at the CDFI Fund, email the CDFI Help Desk at cdfihelp@cdfi.treas.gov.

Additional helpdesk contact information can be located on the CDFI Fund's website. Follow this link: <https://www.cdfifund.gov/pages/contact.aspx>.