

What is a borrower support group?

Day after day we see the ways that socioeconomic barriers affect every aspect of our lives, and how many of our women borrowers face many of the same barriers. We believe that when given access to the right tools and resources, women are the best poverty fighters. Female financial prosperity has been tied with large multiplier effects on the rest of the community. Group-based lending, in which borrowers work together to learn from and support each other, is a model that has been used to successfully open doors to financial systems for women worldwide.

Starting in the fall of 2011, Innovative Changes (IC\$) will convene two small groups of women borrowers for ongoing financial education, peer learning and leadership building. Each group of women will meet twice a month to share experiences around challenging and often taboo personal financial issues that they face in their lives. After three months the women will then have the option to mentor other clients involved in IC\$ programs.

What does it involve?

Being part of the Women's Borrower Support Group is a commitment. It will involve six, two-hour group sessions spread out over three months, one training day and if the participant decides to continue, six additional mentoring sessions to new program participants. Women who decide to become mentors will receive a small financial incentive for their commitment. At each of the two-hour group sessions, food, transportation costs and child care will be provided.

The group sessions will provide participants with a safe, open, and confidential environment in which to air their frustrations, share their successes, and learn from each other's experiences. Participating women must be ready and open to discussions with other women, committed to improving their financial management skills, setting goals and being held accountable to taking steps to meet those goals.

Who can participate?

- Current or potential Innovative Changes loan clients
- To qualify for a loan you must:
 - Have verifiable income
 - Be over 18 years old
 - Have a U.S. government issued photo ID or a Mexican Consulate Matricula Card
 - Be a resident of Oregon, and
 - You may not have a pending bankruptcy or plan to file for bankruptcy within the next six months
- Women committed to becoming financially stable

Who is Innovative Changes?

Innovative Changes is a non-profit Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) whose mission is to help low-income individuals and families, and those who otherwise lack adequate access to capital and/or financial services, manage short-term financial needs in order to achieve and maintain household stability. We do this by providing comprehensive financial education, responsible small-dollar loans, and credit building opportunities.

***For More Information or to apply contact Talia: 503-249-5205 or
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