

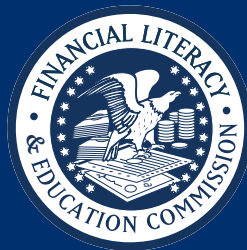
The Financial Literacy and Education Commission

# Strategy for Assuring Financial Empowerment (SAFE) Report

Submitted by

The Financial Literacy and Education Commission

2016



## **Members of the Financial Literacy and Education Commission**

Department of the Treasury (Treasury), Chair  
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), Vice Chair  
Department of Agriculture (USDA)  
Department of Education (ED)  
Department of Defense (DoD)  
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Social Security Administration (SSA)  
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### I. Executive Summary

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Since its establishment in 2003, the Financial Literacy and Education Commission (FLEC) has coordinated the federal government's efforts in promoting financial literacy, education and capability. Composed of government agencies and the White House Domestic Policy Council (DPC), the FLEC manages its activities collaboratively, focusing on direct education and outreach, supporting practitioners, and promoting research and evaluation. Together, the FLEC builds on and enhances the diverse priorities and expertise of its member agencies. Through these efforts the FLEC works toward its vision of sustained financial well-being for all individuals and families in the United States.

The Strategy for Assuring Financial Empowerment (SAFE) Report 2016 highlights the actions taken by FLEC in the past year. Continuing its strategic focus of "Starting Early for Financial Success," the FLEC has concentrated on reaching children, youth and young adults at the early stages of life to help them prepare for their financial futures. Developing financial knowledge and positive behavior early is important for young people's long-term personal financial well-being and contributes to the overall economic health of the nation. This work and this 2016 Report have been organized into three broad categories: financial capability and college and career readiness for young people; starting early for financial stability and long-term savings and investing; and research and evaluation.

In each of these sections, recent federal financial education materials and actions are described. Where applicable, their availability, use, impact and success are detailed. Special attention is focused on historically underserved communities that have lacked access to financial literacy materials and education.

Following these sections, this report provides other updates on FLEC's work for the last year and the plan for the year ahead. Additional information about the FLEC, including [www.mymoney.gov](http://www.mymoney.gov), meetings and hearings, can be found in the Appendix.

### Background on the Financial Literacy and Education Commission

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The Financial Literacy and Education Commission (FLEC, or the Commission) was established under the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003. As of this report, the FLEC is comprised of 22 federal agencies and the White House Domestic Policy Council. FLEC was tasked with developing a national financial education website ([www.mymoney.gov](http://www.mymoney.gov)) and a national strategy on financial education. In 2011, the FLEC issued *Promoting Financial Success in the U.S.: The National Strategy for Financial Literacy*. That document laid out the vision, mission and goals which have guided the FLEC. In November 2016, the FLEC issued the *National Strategy for Financial Literacy Update*<sup>1</sup> to highlight the state of financial education and describe the changes to the field since 2011, and discuss the actions the Commission has taken to advance the National Strategy's goals.

In 2016 the Department of the Interior (DOI) was added to FLEC, notably due to the work of the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST), which has the primary fiduciary responsibility to manage both tribal trust funds and Individual Indian Money accounts. As part of this responsibility, the DOI and OST promotes financial education among Native families, including young people.

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1 <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/financial-education/Documents/National%20Strategy%20for%20Financial%20Literacy%202016%20Update.pdf>

### **Vision: Sustained Financial Well-Being for All Individuals and Families in the U.S.**

The *National Strategy* established a long-term vision of financial well-being, financial stability, and financial security for the diverse U.S. population. Individuals have financial well-being when they can meet current and ongoing obligations, feel secure in their financial future, and are able to make choices that allow enjoyment of life.<sup>2</sup> The *National Strategy* seeks to foster a culture in which people take action to secure their financial well-being. Some of these actions can include: taking periodic stock of their financial situations; seeking information and asking questions before entering into financial transactions; and universal access to use tools and information needed to help manage debt, saving to meet financial goals, and planning for secure financial futures.

### **Mission: Set Strategic Direction for Policy, Education, Practice, Research, and Coordination so That U.S. Individuals and Families Make Informed Financial Decisions**

The mission of the *National Strategy* outlines general areas of action identified as critical in achieving the FLEC’s vision. These action areas—policy, education, practice, research, and coordination—are influenced by all participants in the field of financial education. These encompass federal government and national organizations; state and regional organizations; communities; and schools, all of which help to ensure that diverse and underserved populations are reached. Not every organization will engage in all of these action areas, and the *National Strategy* relies on each organization to find its own balanced blend of effective work.

2 Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, *Financial Well-Being: The Goal of Financial Education*, (January 2015), [http://www.consumerfinance.gov/f/201501\\_cfpb\\_report\\_financial-well-being.pdf](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/f/201501_cfpb_report_financial-well-being.pdf).

The *National Strategy* identifies four goals and related objectives to help move the nation toward the vision and mission outlined above. Some of these goals may be best suited to the federal government; others might be better achieved by state or local governments, the private sector, or through collaborative efforts. The recommended goals serve not only as a course of action for the federal government, but also for financial education field as a whole. These goals are to:

- Increase awareness of and access to effective financial education.
- Determine and integrate core financial competencies.
- Improve financial education infrastructure.

Identify, enhance, and share effective practices.

In 2016, the FLEC released a *National Strategy Update*<sup>3</sup> This document summarizes the learning and achievements of recent years, as well as highlights areas where our efforts can continue to evolve toward attaining our shared vision.

## **II. Strategic Focus on “Starting Early for Financial Success”**

Since 2012, FLEC has a strategic focus on reaching young people at the early stages of life to help them prepare for their financial futures. Building financial knowledge and behaviors early is important for young people’s long-term personal financial well-being and contributes to the overall economic health of the nation. This work has generally been organized in three

3 The 2016 *National Strategy Update* can be found here: <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/financial-education/Documents/National%20Strategy%20for%20Financial%20Literacy%202016%20Update.pdf>

areas, and this Report organizes the FLEC's activities in these areas:

- Financial Capability, College and Career Readiness for Young People
- Starting Early for Financial Stability and Long-Term Savings and Investing
- Research and Evaluation

In each of these sections, recent federal financial education materials and actions are described, and where applicable, their availability, use, impact and success are detailed. Each section describes activities targeted to historically underserved communities that have lacked access to financial literacy materials and education.

Following these sections, this report provides other updates on FLEC's work for the last year and the plan for the year ahead. Additional information about the FLEC, including *mymoney.gov* and meetings and hearings, can be found in the Appendix.

### **Financial Capability, College and Career Readiness for Young People**

The FLEC has explored ways to help young people prepare for a more financially capable adulthood, and has identified that the FLEC can be most effective by providing tools, information and guidance to parents, teachers, and others who work on how to talk to youth about managing money. The FLEC encourages the provision of hands-on learning opportunities, including establishing savings accounts and using partnerships between federal, state, tribal, local and nonprofit partners to reach youth in financially vulnerable situations and those in youth employment programs.

This section describes some examples of FLEC members' collaborative activities during the last year to help build financial capability among young people. Where

available, data on use and impact are included, as well as a description of activities that serve communities that have historically lacked access to financial literacy materials and education and have been underserved by the mainstream financial systems.

### **Youth Financial Capability**

#### *Money as You Grow*<sup>4</sup>

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) has created a web page for parents and caregivers focused on three stages of childhood development: early childhood, middle childhood, and teen years and young adulthood. For each stage, the CFPB offers practical activities and conversation starters that can contribute to specific, age-appropriate knowledge and behavior. These activities and conversation starters are based in large part on *Money as You Grow*, a web site initiative recommended by the President's Advisory Council on Financial Capability.

#### *Advancing K-12 Financial Education: A Guide for Policymakers*<sup>5</sup>

This CFPB guide connects community leaders and education decision-makers with tools, information, and insights to enhance primary and secondary financial education efforts. The guide provides a framework, case studies, and resources for those interested in implementing primary and secondary financial education initiatives in their communities.

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4 [www.consumerfinance.gov/MoneyAsYouGrow/](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/MoneyAsYouGrow/)

5 <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/data-research/research-reports/advancing-k-12-financial-education-a-guide-for-policymakers>

### *Youth Financial Education Curriculum Review Tool*<sup>6</sup>

This CFPB's *Youth Financial Education Curriculum Review Tool* helps educators compare and review financial education curricula within four key areas: content, quality, utility, and efficacy. This resource can help educators and subject-matter experts review financial education materials and determine which curriculum best suits their students. This resource also supports curriculum developers who are creating or revising tomorrow's financial education curricula by helping them identify strengths and areas for further development.

### *Personal Finance Pedagogy*<sup>7</sup>

The CFPB developed the *Personal Finance Pedagogy* as a research-based framework for teaching personal finance skills to children. The *Personal Finance Pedagogy* is designed to help teachers work with their students to improve executive functioning skills such as planning and problem-solving; to create and encourage positive financial habits and effective money management; to build financial research skills to compare and contrast options; and to help teachers to design safe opportunities for youth to practice financial decision-making.

### *Money Smart for Young People*<sup>8</sup>

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) worked with FLEC members to update its *Money Smart for Young People (MSYP)* in 2016. The update incorporates educational resources and programs from other FLEC agencies. *Money Smart for Young People* was originally released in 2015 in collaboration with the CFPB.

6 <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/data-research/research-reports/youth-financial-education-curriculum-review-tool/>

7 [http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/092016\\_cfpb\\_YouthFinEdPedagogy.pdf](http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/092016_cfpb_YouthFinEdPedagogy.pdf)

8 <https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/young.html>

Money Smart for Young People is a curriculum designed to involve teachers, students, and parents/caregivers in the learning process that is aligned with the Jump\$tart Financial Literacy Standards, National Standards in Economics by Council for Economic Education, and the Common Core. The *Parent/Caregiver Guide* offers exercises, activities, and conversation starters on key financial topics, such as prioritizing spending decisions and staying safe online. The *Educator Guide* suggests ways to incorporate financial education instruction into academic disciplines such as math. The guides are available in English and Spanish. Lesson plans for MSYP were downloaded more than 28,000 times during its first full year of production. Additionally, 189 educators from 26 school districts received professional development training to assist them in using MSYP as part of a small pilot project.

### *The Teacher Online Resource Center*<sup>9</sup>

Educators can use this FDIC website to access curriculum and other resources from across FLEC agencies, including the CFPB, which support financial literacy instruction. The Teacher Online Resource Center will soon be enhanced by five new videos that showcase the key features of the *Money Smart for Young People* curriculum.

### *Youth Savings Pilot Program*<sup>10</sup>

The FDIC's *Youth Savings Pilot Program* is designed to better understand how financial education efforts can be enhanced through hands-on learning opportunities. The *Youth Savings Pilot Program* is aimed at identifying promising approaches to financial education tied to the opening of safe, low-cost savings accounts for school-aged children. The FDIC promoted knowledge-sharing

9 <https://www.fdic.gov/teachers>

10 <https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/assistance/protection/depaccounts/youthsavings/index.html>

among the 21 banks in the pilot, asking questions and sharing information about the program design and structure with peers. Approaches to program evaluation, offering incentives, and opening accounts are all critical success factors that are being studied as part of the pilot. A symposium brought together representatives from banks, non-profits and school partners in the pilot to discuss lessons learned and inform the development of the summary report to be released in early 2017. The report will communicate lessons learned and offer promising practices for banks to work with schools and other organizations to emphasize the importance of savings accounts when providing financial education.

### ***Your Mission in Action: Developing Youth Financial Literacy and Savings Programs***<sup>11</sup>

As part of National Financial Capability Month, the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) hosted its annual financial literacy webinar. The webinar informed credit unions about youth financial literacy initiatives, resources, and opportunities available from credit unions, NCUA, other federal government agencies, and non-profit groups.

### ***World of Cents and MyCreditUnion.gov***<sup>12</sup>

NCUA released “World of Cents,”<sup>13</sup> a new online interactive financial learning tool. The “World of Cents” learning experience touches on the important building blocks for making smart financial decisions, such as math skills, good savings habits and the concepts of earning, saving and spending money. “World of Cents” is found on NCUA’s consumer website, *MyCreditUnion.gov*, and its financial literacy

microsite, *Pocket Cents*. NCUA’s consumer website *MyCreditUnion.gov* had 742,613 visits in 2015, an increase of more than 31 percent from 564,970 visits in 2014; the Spanish version of the site had 47,547 visits.

### ***A Financial Empowerment Toolkit for Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care***<sup>14</sup>

This toolkit from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) provides resources that youth service organizations can use to help vulnerable young adults achieve greater financial capability. These complement the online resources and tools developed by the CFPB<sup>15</sup> that foster care caseworkers can use to protect foster youth from identity theft.

### ***Make a New Year’s Resolution to Save in 2016: Financial Literacy for a Brighter Future!***

The Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration (DOL/ETA) partnered with America Saves to offer tips and share resources on savings and to promote America Saves Week. The webinar offered as part of this partnership also presented highlights of the agency’s work on financial literacy under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and on the technical assistance to the workforce system that offers financial education to out-of-school youth. The Office of Disability Employment Policy discussed financial literacy issues that were specific to the differently-abled.

11 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLMI7iZ6wGk>

12 <https://www.mycreditunion.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

13 <https://www.mycreditunion.gov/Pages/world-of-cents-game.aspx>

14 <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/financial-empowerment-toolkit>

15 <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/how-to-protect-vulnerable-children-from-identity-theft/#dispute>



### Career Readiness for Young People

#### *Resource Guide for Financial Institutions: Incorporating Financial Capability into Youth Employment Programs*<sup>16</sup>

FLEC continues its effort to include high-quality financial education and access to banking products in youth employment programs. In fall 2016, FLEC released a guide for financial institutions interested in enhancing financial capability through partnerships with youth employment programs. The guide maps out how and why financial institutions can help young people, especially low- and moderate-income young people, achieve greater financial well-being and employment success. The document highlights youth employment programs funded under the WIOA and locally funded programs that have formed strong and effective partnerships with financial institutions. It is intended to help more financial institutions build on these successful approaches.

#### *Youth Employment Success (YES) Pilot Program*

In 2015, the CFPB and DOL/ETA launched a technical assistance pilot to support the integration of financial capability in municipal youth employment programs, with assistance from other FLEC agencies. Youth Employment Success Pilot Program (YES) worked with 24 city youth employment programs to provide assistance in curriculum development and systems-level integration, and to create a learning cohort for programs to share their experiences. The FDIC also shared a crosswalk to map its *Money Smart* financial education resources to the WIOA financial literacy education program element. DOL/ETA, CFPB,

and the National League of Cities offered a webinar on lessons learned infusing financial capability into summer youth programs and strategies for building financial capability in communities.<sup>17</sup> In early 2017 the YES will convene program managers, stakeholders, and partners for a roundtable to discuss opportunities for further collaboration.

#### *How to Leverage Financial Education to Improve the Impact of WIOA Conference*<sup>18</sup>

The Federal Reserve Banks of Boston and New York, along with DOL/ETA's Region 1, hosted this event, which included Treasury and other FLEC agencies. Presenters highlighted financial literacy initiatives and program models, delivery strategies, and tools and resources for building successful workforce programs. It also focused on developing partnerships that result in financially capable youth and positive program outcomes. Subject matter experts offered technical assistance to workforce practitioners on options for delivering financial services.

#### *Social Security Administration's Youth Employment Resources*

The SSA created four new resources that can be used by other agencies, non-profit organizations, educators and youth employment programs to educate youth about Social Security benefits and the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA). The documents and infographics can be incorporated into financial education curriculum or as stand-alone educational materials. These resources are being included in the curriculum of

16 [https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/financial-education/SiteAssets/Pages/flec11032016/Resource%20Guide%20for%20Financial%20Institutions\\_FLEC%20D11%202%2016.pdf](https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/financial-education/SiteAssets/Pages/flec11032016/Resource%20Guide%20for%20Financial%20Institutions_FLEC%20D11%202%2016.pdf)

17 [https://www.workforcegps.org/events/2015/04/01/12/02/Financial\\_Capability\\_Youth\\_Employment\\_Programs\\_Steps\\_Get\\_Started](https://www.workforcegps.org/events/2015/04/01/12/02/Financial_Capability_Youth_Employment_Programs_Steps_Get_Started)

18 <https://www.bostonfed.org/news-and-events/events/2015/leveraging-financial-education-wioa-event.aspx>

the America Saves for Young Workers 2017 Summer Employment Program in 27 cities.

### ***Get Financially Fit Early In Your Career***<sup>19</sup>

The Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration (DOL/EBSA), the Department of Education (ED) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) held webinars for new workers to help them make informed financial decisions and get a good financial start. The webinars discussing setting goals and saving, options for student loans and managing credit and debt.

### ***Save That Money – Money Skills for College Seniors, New Workers, and Their Parents***<sup>20</sup>

DOL/EBSA, CFPB and ED produced a webinar that provided information to help prepare college seniors and new workers to make solid financial decisions. Topics included planning, budgeting, saving, and managing debt, including student loans. The agencies invited parents to share their knowledge and skills to prepare their children to manage their financial lives, especially as they reach important milestones.

### ***DOL and USDA Rural Youth Briefing Roundtable***

DOL/EBSA worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to host a financial literacy briefing with youth attending the 2016 USDA National 4-H Conference. The youth briefed DOL staff on how DOL could encourage youth ages 16 to 24 earning a paycheck for the first time to gain financial capability and save and plan for their financial future. The youth also discussed the challenges of using social media for outreach.

19 <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/es/node/663>

20 <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/events/money-skills-webinar-2016-04>

### ***Youth.gov***<sup>21</sup>

FLEC members use this federal government website, which helps people create, maintain, and strengthen effective youth programs, to introduce resources on financial capability and literacy from across the FLEC agencies.

### ***College Readiness for Young People***

#### ***Federal Financial Aid***

Making beneficial financial decisions about post-secondary education before selecting an institution of higher learning can contribute to financial well-being before and after higher education. The FLEC is working to make more students and their families aware of federal financial aid resources that can help them make sound decisions about their post-secondary options. Besides the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)*<sup>22</sup>, the CFPB's *Paying for College*<sup>23</sup> which includes resources on student loan repayment options, and the *Financial Aid Toolkit*,<sup>24</sup> *College Scorecard*, and *Financial Aid Shopping Sheet* are all tools that can be used to help optimize the college decision-making process toward improved college outcomes.

#### ***Opportunities to Improve the Financial Capability and Financial Well-being of Post-Secondary Students***<sup>25</sup>

The FLEC released this report, which: identifies the state of financial education among post-secondary students; underscores current efforts to enhance financial education in a number of institutions; and identifies

21 <http://youth.gov/>

22 <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>

23 <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/paying-for-college/>

24 <https://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/tk/>

25 <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/financial-education/Documents/Opportunities%20to%20Improve%20the%20Financial%20Capability%20and%20Financial%20Wellbeing%20of%20Postsecondary%20Students.pdf>

issues regarding students' understanding of financial aid and financial education topics. The report includes federal government policies and resources that can be used to improve personal and financial outcomes for students. The report concludes with recommendations for how institutions of higher education can better equip students to make critical financial decisions throughout their lives.

The role of colleges and universities was also highlighted at the February 2016 FLEC meeting through a panel on "Leading Practices in Post-secondary Education." This panel included representatives from the Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation, The Ohio State University, and Prince George's Community College. ED has also encouraged best practices by sponsoring a Community College Financial Capability roundtable and presenting on financial education and research opportunities at a meeting of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

ED's Federal Student Aid (FSA) issues the *Financial Literacy Guidance*<sup>26</sup> to all colleges and universities that process student aid. To help colleges and universities develop partnerships to provide on-campus or co-branded banking products that are more consumer-friendly, the CFPB released the *Safe Student Account Toolkit*.<sup>27</sup> It provides specific provisions and criteria that institutions can use to compare different product features and evaluate which might better serve their students.

Once students enter college, they frequently benefit from receiving financial education as part of their education. ED mandates entrance and exit counseling for students who borrow using federal loans. FLEC is also

promoting better communication to make borrowers aware of payment plans available on federal student loans, including income-based repayment plans that cap loan payments.

FLEC members also have promoted a number of resources to prospective and current students, as well as those who have completed their education who need assistance with student debt. Many of these outreach activities are targeted to or are likely to reach underserved populations. These include integrating information on federal student aid in key resources, such as USDA's eXtension, FDIC's Money Smart curriculum and blogs cross-posted by ED and General Services Administration (GSA). Outreach conducted included a 4-H webinar about financial aid resources; CFPB and FSA co-hosted Twitter Office Hours; ED-presented student loan repayment webinar for 400 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employees; and training sessions to ED's TRIO grantees.

### III. Starting Early for Financial Stability and Long-Term Savings and Investing

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Improving financial capability throughout life begins with starting early for financial stability and long-term savings and investing. Transforming hard-earned income into a secure and dignified retirement is critical for the sustained financial success of Americans and their families. Robust levels of retirement savings also have substantial macroeconomic effects far beyond the individual household. Nonetheless, too many Americans are not planning for retirement. The Federal Reserve Board's *2013 Survey of Consumer Finances*<sup>28</sup> shows that fewer than half of households had retirement savings accounts, and even for those that do have

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26 <https://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/resources/fin-lit-guidance.pdf>

27 [http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201512\\_cfpb\\_safe-student-account-toolkit.pdf](http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201512_cfpb_safe-student-account-toolkit.pdf)

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28 <https://www.federalreserve.gov/pubs/bulletin/2014/pdf/scf14.pdf>

them, balances are far from adequate to cover retirement needs. According to a 2016 survey, more than half of workers report that they have less than \$25,000 in savings.<sup>29</sup> This may be because they are focused on managing debts. It may also be due to a lack of availability and accessibility of long-term savings products. Troublingly, more than half of Americans are worried about running out of money in retirement.<sup>30</sup>

This section describes some examples of FLEC members' collaborative activities in the last year to help build financial capability, stability, and positive long-term savings and investing behaviors. Examples include activities that serve communities that lack access to financial literacy materials and education and historically have been underserved by mainstream financial systems. Where data are available, the descriptions identify the impact of the information on people's financial knowledge and behavior.

For many Americans, the best opportunity to save and invest is through a workplace retirement plan such as a 401(k). But many Americans lack any access to a workplace retirement savings or pension plans. Ideally, all employers would provide opportunities for workers to save and invest. However, due to the fact that many employers do not, and that many people are self-employed, President Obama has proposed—in every budget request since he took office—automatically enrolling workers without access to a workplace retirement plan into an Individual Retirement Account (IRA). This would provide an additional 30 million Americans with access to a retirement plan.

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29 [https://www.ebri.org/pdf/surveys/rcs/2016/EBRI\\_IB\\_422.Mar16.RCS.pdf](https://www.ebri.org/pdf/surveys/rcs/2016/EBRI_IB_422.Mar16.RCS.pdf)

30 [http://www.usfinancialcapability.org/downloads/NFCS\\_2015\\_Report\\_Natl\\_Findings.pdf](http://www.usfinancialcapability.org/downloads/NFCS_2015_Report_Natl_Findings.pdf)

## Retirement and Long-Term Savings

### *myRA*<sup>31</sup>

Treasury's *myRA* was launched to provide a safe, simple and affordable option to start to save for retirement, especially designed for those who don't have access to other retirement savings options. It is free; there are no minimum balances and no fees. There is no risk of losing money because it is a Treasury security and savings are invested in risk-free U.S. Treasury retirement savings bonds. Signing up is easy on *myRA.gov* and includes simple on-line enrollment. In short, *myRA* removes the barriers that make it hard to save for millions of Americans. Treasury worked and continues to work with FLEC partners to spread the word to consumers and others about this new way to help people start to save.

### *Envisioning a Secure Financial Future*

The Social Security Administration (SSA) released a letter to more than 10,000 partners announcing their partnership with the Treasury in a joint campaign to encourage financial readiness. Through this effort, Treasury and SSA have been cross-promoting the *myRA* and *my Social Security account*<sup>32</sup> to help people prepare for their retirement. Other SSA efforts include presentations by staff and senior officials in speaking engagements, blog posts, social media, and other efforts. From March 2015 through May 2016, these efforts are estimated to have reached more than 23,500 people in 320 activities and close to 180,000 people through 45 social media messages. In February 2016, information on *myRA* began running on TV monitors in over 1,200 SSA field office waiting rooms nationwide and in SSA's headquarters in Baltimore.

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31 <http://www.myRA.gov>

32 <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/>

### *Choosing a Retirement Solution for Your Small Business*<sup>33</sup>

The DOL/EBSA, in coordination with the Consumer Federation of America, sponsored a webinar to encourage small business owners and their employees to save for retirement. The webinar provided information on retirement savings options for employers with no retirement plan and included a presentation by Treasury on *myRA*.

### *Financial Planning Video Series*<sup>34</sup>

For workers in workplace retirement plans, DOL/EBSA developed and released a video series. The four videos cover setting goals, developing and tracking a budget, determining a target retirement saving rate, and managing debt. The videos are coordinated with DOL/EBSA's online worksheets on each of the key financial planning steps, and help users to complete the steps and save their work, making it easily available for future monitoring and updates.

### *Taking the Mystery Out of Retirement Planning*<sup>35</sup>

For workers nearing retirement, the DOL/EBSA, SSA, and HHS sponsored the “*Taking the Mystery Out of Retirement Planning*” webinar. SSA, HHS's Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and Administration on Community Living spotlighted life after work including decisions that need to be made and when for a financially secure retirement. Topics included making the most of an employer-provided retirement plan and checking if retirement savings are on track, Social Security and Medicare benefits

including factors to consider in deciding when to sign up for benefits and what they cover, and elder rights and how to avoid abuse and scams. This four-agency webinar is popular and has become an annual event.

### *The Department of Veterans Affairs' Benefits Assistance Service*

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been working to ensure that service members, veterans, and their families use the benefits they've earned to achieve long-term economic success. The VA's Benefits Assistance Service, in particular, has been successful in helping service members, veterans and their families receive important information and resources to help them along the way. The VA also improved their outreach by launching a YouTube channel, Facebook,<sup>36</sup> and Twitter benefits page, and questions and answers about debts to the VA.<sup>37</sup>

### *Workforce and Financial Empowerment: City of Louisville, KY*<sup>38</sup>

DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy and the Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities (LEAD) Center brought together representatives from DOL's EBSA and ETA, the FDIC, and the City of Louisville's Metro Community Services' Workforce and Financial Empowerment workgroup. The agencies participated in a webinar training that discussed financial literacy tools and resources, along with workforce development implementation strategies. The webinar addressed the importance of financial literacy and financial capability, increased awareness of the new requirements of WIOA to integrate financial literacy as part of youth and adult

33 <https://www.dol.gov/sites/default/files/ebsa/about-ebsa/our-activities/resource-center/publications/choosing.pdf>

34 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5okKFTThquw&list=P L6F71CF53337F836B&index=41>

35 <https://www.dol.gov/sites/default/files/ebsa/about-ebsa/our-activities/resource-center/publications/taking-the-mystery-out-of-retirement-planning.pdf>

36 <https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs>

37 <http://www.va.gov/debtman/>

38 <https://louisvilleky.gov/government/community-services/financial-ladder>

services, provided information about resources available to support financial literacy activities, and increased understanding of strategies that build public and private sector engagement.

### ***Planning for Retirement***<sup>39</sup>

This online educational tool helps consumers approaching retirement make an informed decision about when to claim Social Security. The tool, developed collaboratively between CFPB and SSA, helps consumers understand how their claiming age affects their benefits and provides tips relevant to their situation. This can be used as a starter to help consumers think about their retirement needs and goals. The tool is optimized for mobile use and is also available in Spanish.<sup>40</sup> The tool was launched at an event on “Helping America Plan for Retirement” at the Brookings Institution.

### ***Money Smart for Small Business***<sup>41</sup>

Money Smart Alliance Members contributed to significant improvements in *Money Smart for Small Business*, developed by the FDIC and the Small Business Administration (SBA). Three new modules were added to the curriculum: the first helps aspiring entrepreneurs learn about business ownership and distinguishes between the myths and realities of small business ownership; the second gives a realistic perspective on costs of starting a business and time required to launch; and the third helps identify some ways to manage cash flow. Other modules were enhanced by adding additional information for small businesses on how to establish and maintain a banking relationship. New training resources were released to encourage the

expanded use of *Money Smart for Small Business*. For the first time, the entire small business curriculum is now available in Spanish. The agencies worked together to promote these resources through regional activities, including events at community banks, Women’s Business Centers, and Small Business Development Centers. A success story in the Summer 2016 edition of *Money Smart News* also illustrated ways that the curriculum is being used to support entrepreneurship.

### ***Engagement of Spanish Speaking Consumers***

The FDIC released new Spanish language resources as part of their consumer protection initiatives. Its new website, “*Recursos para Consumidores en español*,” features links to webinars and video presentations that cover topics such as deposit insurance, consumer protection, and the FDIC’s *Money Smart* education program.<sup>42</sup>

The NCUA hosted a panel discussion titled “Unique Challenges and Opportunities Serving Hispanic Credit Union Members” to promote Hispanic financial inclusion.<sup>43</sup>

### ***Building Financial Capability: A Planning Guide for Integrated Services***<sup>44</sup> ***and Building Financial Capability in Workforce Programs***<sup>45</sup>

Published by HHS, *Building Financial Capability: A Planning Guide for Integrated Services* is an interactive resource for community-based organizations that can

39 <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/retirement/before-you-claim/>

40 <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/retirement/before-you-claim/es/>

41 <https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/business.html>

42 [https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/education/seminarios\\_web.html](https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/education/seminarios_web.html)

43 <https://www.ncua.gov/newsroom/Pages/news-2015-nov-panel-discussion.aspx>

44 <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/resource/afi-resource-guide-building-financial-capability>

45 [https://www.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/04/06/10/44/Building\\_Financial\\_Capability\\_in\\_Workforce\\_Programs\\_5\\_Part\\_Webcast\\_Series\\_January\\_2016](https://www.workforcegps.org/resources/2016/04/06/10/44/Building_Financial_Capability_in_Workforce_Programs_5_Part_Webcast_Series_January_2016)

be used to integrate financial capability services into existing programs. HHS enhanced the guide with the release of five short training videos that provided an overview of the integrated service guide.

In late fall 2015, DOL's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) collaborated with HHS to develop a five-part webcast series. The series uses *Building Financial Capability: A Planning Guide for Integrating Services* to provide guidance on how to integrate financial capability services into workforce programs. It also helps to promote and raise awareness of financial literacy and make the case for improved employment and retention outcomes resulting from integration of financial services in employment programs. This series of "breeze presentations" was posted as a resource on ETA's WorkforceGPS, an on-line communication and technical assistance learning platform. The WIOA youth program serves primarily out-of-school youth who often need remedial education and other career pathways opportunities including work experiences.

#### IV. Research and Evaluation

FLEC is committed to evidence-based policies and practices and, therefore, promotes research and evaluation in the field of financial education. This section describes some examples of FLEC's collaborative activities to enhance and share research and evaluation across FLEC members, other federal agencies, and outside partners, as described in its 2012 Research Priorities<sup>46</sup>. The FLEC's *National Strategy Update* also provides a summary of recent research from FLEC members and others regarding the state of financial

education and effective approaches to building financial capability.

Through the *Financial Empowerment Innovation Fund (FEIF)*,<sup>47</sup> Treasury is investing in research projects that are developing, testing, and evaluating new ways public, private, and non-profit entities can assist Americans with making financial decisions and obtaining safe and affordable financial services. The 11 research projects will develop, test, and evaluate new ways to empower Americans with their finances and help them access safe and affordable financial products and services. These research projects focus on several areas, including promoting more informed decision-making in higher education, promoting innovations in payments and savings, and bringing dynamic financial education to more classrooms.

For example, through the Treasury's *FEIF*, the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center for Financial Security recently completed an evaluation of My Classroom Economy (MCE<sup>48</sup>), an innovative approach to financial education. In contrast to more traditional financial education programs based around lesson plans, MCE is experiential. Teachers establish a classroom-based economy that integrates into the school day as a classroom management system. Research suggests that this type of experiential approach is a promising teaching strategy, with the added benefit of minimizing time away from other classroom activities. During the 2015-2016 school year, 24 elementary schools in the School District of Palm Beach County, FL participated in the evaluation. Students in MCE classrooms showed consistent gains in financial knowledge, budgeting, financial socialization, and economic experience after 10 weeks. These effects ranged in size but were all statistically

46 <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/financial-education/Documents/2012%20Research%20Priorities%20-%20May%202012.pdf>

47 <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/financial-education/Pages/Finemp.aspx>

48 <https://cfs.wisc.edu/2016/09/15/mce/>

significant and positive. Overall, the results of this study are encouraging and highlight the promise of experiential learning programs like MCE for elementary school-age students.

The CFPB is working to measure and better understand what influences financial well-being – the end goal of financial education – in order to ultimately increase the effectiveness of financial education. This goal is consistent with the guiding vision of FLEC’s *National Strategy* of achieving “[s]ustained financial well-being for all individuals and families in the United States.”<sup>49</sup> The CFPB released a set of 10 questions – a “scale” – to measure adult financial well-being.<sup>50</sup> In the next phase of this research, which began in 2016, the CFPB is using the financial well-being scale in a nationally representative survey to measure the financial well-being of adults in America and test hypotheses about the factors that help people achieve higher levels of financial well-being.

The CFPB released a report entitled, “*Building Blocks to Help Youth Achieve Financial Capability: a New Model and Recommendations*,”<sup>51</sup> which describes a research-based developmental framework for financial capability and identifies promising strategies for supporting their development throughout childhood and youth. This research project leveraged the findings of the CFPB’s adult financial well-being research to gain insights into the abilities, attitudes, and other characteristics in children and youth that support financial capability

49 See Financial Literacy & Education Commission, *Promoting Financial Success in the United States: National Strategy for Financial Literacy 2011* at 7, available at [treasury.gov/resource-center/financial-education/Documents/NationalStrategyBook\\_12310%20\(2\).pdf](http://treasury.gov/resource-center/financial-education/Documents/NationalStrategyBook_12310%20(2).pdf).

50 The scale questionnaire and scoring worksheet are available at [consumerfinance.gov/data-research/research-reports/financial-well-being-scale/](http://consumerfinance.gov/data-research/research-reports/financial-well-being-scale/).

51 <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/data-research/research-reports/building-blocks-help-youth-achieve-financial-capability/>

and financial well-being in adulthood. To help program leaders, financial educators, and others apply the developmental model in their work, the report includes four key strategies that help youth acquire the building blocks of financial capability.

The brief entitled *Single Email Prompts Individuals to Increase Retirement Savings*<sup>52</sup> was released by the DOL Behavioral Interventions Project. The research shows ways to better encourage employees to focus on saving and investing for retirement. Similarly, *Promoting Retirement Security in the 2015 Annual Report of the White House’s Behavioral and Social Sciences Team*<sup>53</sup> outlines a demonstration project to help servicemembers interested in saving for the future participate in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) through an email campaign and other strategies.

The FLEC Research and Evaluation Committee worked with the American Council on Consumer Interests (ACCI) to provide agency staff research briefings and discuss implications with members of ACCI. Presentations provided FLEC members with overviews of the state of knowledge on several topics related to consumer financial decision-making and outcomes, and served as a jumping-off point for a discussion of underlying mechanisms or factors driving consumer behavior and outcomes, as well as potential policy and program interventions, and priority areas for new research.

In September 2016, SSA and Treasury co-hosted a Financial Security Research Symposium,<sup>54</sup> which highlighted research from FLEC member agencies

52 [https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/BISStudy/files/Single\\_Email\\_Prompts\\_Individuals\\_to\\_Increase\\_Retirement\\_Savings.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/BISStudy/files/Single_Email_Prompts_Individuals_to_Increase_Retirement_Savings.pdf)

53 [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/sbst\\_2015\\_annual\\_report\\_final\\_9\\_14\\_15.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/sbst_2015_annual_report_final_9_14_15.pdf)

54 <http://www.yorkcast.com/treasury/events/2016/09/07/financialsecurity/>



and other institutions and identified policy implications on a range of issues relating to Americans' financial security and retirement readiness, including understanding of Social Security and workplace savings and other assets. The Symposium also identified areas and approaches for future research.

The USDA has led a variety of research, education, and outreach programs for ensuring financial empowerment of individuals (youth and adults), families, and businesses. These include personal finance research. Below are links to detailed information about USDA's public-facing financial education activities. These include personal finance,<sup>55</sup> financial capability,<sup>56</sup> and youth financial education.<sup>57</sup>

In 2016, SSA collaborated with ED to support the *Minorities and Retirement Security Program (MRS)*<sup>58</sup> to provide funding to graduate students and their mentors at eligible Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Historically Black-Serving Institutions (HBSIs) to support training, education, collaborative research, and dissemination in the areas of retirement security and financial literacy. Research fellows and their faculty mentors from the four grantee institutions (Chicago State University, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Hampton University, and the University of Houston-Downtown) conducted and published research in these areas.

In order for SSA to evaluate the public's knowledge of Social Security programs and their preferences for receiving information about these programs, SSA collaborated with HHS' National Institute on Aging to support the *Understanding America Study (UAS)*<sup>59</sup>

55 [http://articles.extension.org/personal\\_finance](http://articles.extension.org/personal_finance)  
56 <https://nifa.usda.gov/program/financial-capability>  
57 <https://nifa.usda.gov/youth-financial-education>  
58 <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/mrs/index.html>  
59 <https://uasdata.usc.edu/>

Internet panel. SSA funding allowed the University of Southern California to create a nationally representative panel of approximately 6,000 individuals that will grow in the future. Every year, panel members will be administered surveys that will ascertain their knowledge of SSA programs and their preferred method to receive information from SSA; every other year panel members will complete the Core Health and Retirement Study (HRS), Financial Management, and cognitive abilities surveys. On an ongoing basis, all panel members will take a personality trait instrument<sup>60</sup> and a financial literacy instrument. Other agencies and outside entities can use the panel to administer their own surveys. Some of these other survey instruments include the *Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Financial Well-Being Scale*,<sup>61</sup> Federal Reserve Board's *Boston Survey of Consumer Payment Choice*,<sup>62</sup> and the *Discover Financial Health Check*<sup>63</sup>.

Researchers across FLEC agencies, working internally on an interagency basis and with external partners, issued research on a range of relevant topics in the last year. These include journal articles and agency-issued reports on higher education and lifetime earnings, retirement preparation, understanding SSA and benefit claiming, financial behaviors and relationship abuse, and access to credit and capital in Native communities.

60 McCrae, R. R & John, O. (1992). An introduction to the five-factor model and its applications. *Journal of Personality*, 60(2), 174-2142104214214

61 <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/data-research/research-reports/financial-well-being-scale/>

62 <https://www.bostonfed.org/publications/survey-of-consumer-payment-choice.aspx>

63 [https://www.discover.com/credit-cards/resources/financial-fitness-quiz?gcmpgn=0809\\_ZZ\\_srch\\_gsan\\_txt\\_4&srchQ=financial%20health%20check&srchS=internet\\_cm\\_corp&srchC=internet\\_cm\\_fe&srchP=1](https://www.discover.com/credit-cards/resources/financial-fitness-quiz?gcmpgn=0809_ZZ_srch_gsan_txt_4&srchQ=financial%20health%20check&srchS=internet_cm_corp&srchC=internet_cm_fe&srchP=1)

### V. Other Recent Activities

In 2016, as in prior years, President Obama proclaimed April to be National Financial Capability Month. In the most recent proclamation, President Obama noted:

“When every American has the tools they need to get ahead and contribute to our country’s success, we are all better off. Since the recession, we have built our economy to be better and stronger than before, but we still have work to do to make hardworking families’ paychecks go further. Ensuring people have the resources to make informed decisions about their finances is critical in this effort, and during National Financial Capability Month, we recommit to equipping individuals with the knowledge and protections necessary to secure a stable financial future for themselves and their families.” Many activities described in this report took place during *National Financial Capability Month*.<sup>64</sup>

#### FLEC Public Meetings

In the past year, FLEC Public Meetings have highlighted important research and advances in a number of areas of interest to members of the FLEC and the broader financial education field. Minutes and other materials from the FLEC public meetings can be found at *Treasury’s Resource Center*.<sup>65</sup>

These include:

- financial education and investment advice, in light of DOL’s new rule on conflicts of reflecting the activities of a number of FLEC members

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/03/31/presidential-proclamation-national-financial-capability-month-2016>

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/financial-education/Pages/meetings.aspx>

that are also part of the White House Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable;

- leading practices in post-secondary education;
- next steps on financial inclusion; and
- preparing for financial security through saving and investing.

#### Program Changes

We note that the following programs have been reduced in scope since the last SAFE report.

- HUD Housing Counseling has reduced funding from nearly \$10 million in 2010, to \$4.5 million in 2016.
- The National Foreclosure Counseling Program declined from its peak of \$360 million in 2008 to \$40 million in 2016.

#### Other Related FLEC Agency Activities

##### Protecting Americans from Fraud

###### *Identity Theft.gov*<sup>66</sup>

Hosted by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), this is the federal government’s one-stop resource for identity theft victims. The site provides streamlined checklists and sample letters to guide consumers through the recovery process.

###### *SmartCheck*<sup>67</sup>

The U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission’s (CFTC) Office of Customer Education and Outreach (OCEO) launched *CFTC SmartCheck*, an anti-fraud

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.identitytheft.gov>

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.smartcheck.gov/>

initiative based on social marketing principles. Investors can access tools to help them research the registration and disciplinary histories of financial professionals and stay ahead of scam artists with news and alerts. To draw investors to the website, CFTC employed targeted media and event-based outreach. CFTC SmartCheck Social Media Launch included printed materials such as Joint CFTC/State Brochure, Infographics, Google Hangout with the GSA, website resources and videos.

### *NCUA's Fraud Prevention Center*<sup>68</sup>

The NCUA also launched a new web-based tool to help consumers learn about a variety of consumer protection issues, including: frauds and scams, identity theft, online security, and fraud prevention resources. It also makes available *NCUA Consumer Report* videos on its YouTube Channel and *MyCreditUnion.gov*<sup>69</sup> to educate consumers and credit unions about important financial protection issues such as understanding payday loans and fraud detection. The NCUA video series has had more than 21,500 views since its launch in 2013.

### *Before You Invest, Investor.gov*<sup>70</sup> *Public Awareness Campaign*

In March 2016, the Securities and Exchange Commission's Office of Investor Education and Advocacy initiated a pilot public service campaign with the theme "*Before You Invest, Investor.gov*," reminding investors of the importance of checking the background and registration status of investment professionals, through the website, *www.Investor.gov*. The website provides a wide range of assistance on investor-related topics, including alerts and bulletins designed

to help educate the public about investing and avoiding investment fraud. Additionally, OIEA and the SEC's eleven regional offices have conducted in-person presentations to investors, including programs targeted to seniors, service members, students, and other affinity groups. SEC outreach has focused on the importance of saving and investing, researching investment professionals and investments, understanding fees, and the common red flags of investment fraud. Some examples from the past year: SEC Chair Mary Jo White led a multi-agency event to support Military Consumer Protection Day at Fort Dix in New Jersey; programs with other FLEC agencies, state securities regulators, self-regulatory organizations, and non-profit organizations, including a program with the Thrift Savings Board for federal employees and members of the uniformed services considering retirement or leaving federal service; participation in the FTC's webinar, Free Resources to Help Your Constituents Fight Scams and Fraud, for Congressional staff; and coordination of a program focused on older Americans with the CFPB and SSA held at the New York Public Library.

### **Older Americans**

#### *Money Smart for Older Adults (MSOA)*<sup>71</sup>

The CFPB and the FDIC collaborated to update their financial education tool, *Money Smart for Older Adults (MSOA)*, for release in early 2017. MSOA provides information for older adults and their caregivers on preventing and responding to financial exploitation. These issues can include avoiding scams and identity theft, charity giving, debt collection and grandchild imposter scams. The resource also incorporates other, newer federal resources that can be helpful on topics such as how to research an investment advisor. MSOA is offered by community organizations around the country that

68 <http://www.mycreditunion.gov/fraud/Pages/default.aspx>

69 <http://www.mycreditunion.gov>

70 <https://www.investor.gov/>

71 <https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/OlderAdult.html>

interact with older adults, family members, or caregivers, in Spanish as well as English.

Many members of the FLEC also serve as members of the Elder Justice Coordinating Council and support its activities.

### Notable Partnerships and Tools

#### *Library Initiative*<sup>72</sup>

The FLEC promotes consumer access to reliable, unbiased financial education and resources through public libraries across the country. As of September 2016, CFPB and FLEC members have worked with library staff in more than 1,200 communities and 2,700 library branches across 50 states and Puerto Rico. The CFPB works with national organizations that have relationships with libraries and local communities and can make additional resources available, including the FINRA Investor Education Foundation, the American Library Association, the Association of Rural and Small Libraries, the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Foundation for Credit Counseling, the Foundation for Financial Planning, United Way, and the National Endowment for Financial Education. The CFPB and other partners host training sessions for libraries.

Training sessions for the Los Angeles County Library were conducted in partnership with the FDIC. FDIC's Community Affairs staff discussed how the Los Angeles Alliance for Economic Inclusion is promoting savings through its LA Saves campaign. Several local libraries are engaged in the campaign. Staff also promoted how Money Smart can be used as a resource to

train new immigrants. Twenty-five librarians signed-up for follow-up information for LA Saves.

#### *Assisting Americans at Tax Time: Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Stakeholder Partnership Education & Communication (SPEC)*<sup>73</sup> *and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program*<sup>74</sup>

In an effort to assist taxpayers, the *Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)* and *Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE)* programs work to ensure that individuals and families receive all the benefits to which they are entitled, such as the Low-Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). These efforts include free tax return preparation and outreach to taxpayers. Many SPEC partners have incorporated financial education and asset-building programs and services (such as income support, debt and credit counseling, financial education training, banking education, home ownership and small business management) into their free tax return preparation activities. SPEC works with several organizations to promote the importance of financial education and asset building. SPEC has promoted the following initiatives and/or strategies by sharing information about these programs with national and local partners: Real Economic Impact Tour, Money Smart, America Saves Week, *www.Healthcare.gov*, and *myRA*. SPEC is also known for overseeing the Taxpayer education programs, including the delivery of key messages that educate or inform individual taxpayers about meeting their tax obligations. SPEC has supported outreach to taxpayers primarily in the areas of tax law compliance, financial education, and asset building.

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/library-resources/>

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/partners-and-stakeholders>

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/free-tax-return-preparation-for-you-by-volunteers>

Forty-one VITA programs around the country participated with the CFPB to offer webinars on incorporating financial education in the tax preparation process to VITA site managers and their volunteer tax preparers. The CFPB offered an array of educational materials<sup>75</sup>, which are available in English and Spanish. Resources for VITA efforts included information sheets, posters, flyers and social media-ready content. These materials highlighted the benefits of saving at tax time and explained available savings options while filing a return, such as direct deposit into a savings account, splitting the refund into multiple accounts, purchase of a Series I savings bond, or deposit into *myRA*. These participating VITA sites served more than 350,000 tax customers across the country during the 2016 tax season.

### *Direct Express for Android<sup>76</sup> and iPhone<sup>77</sup>*

The Treasury launched these mobile apps, which allow the 5.5 million federal benefit recipients using the *Direct Express*<sup>®</sup> *Debit MasterCard*<sup>®</sup> <sup>78</sup> to check card balances, view transaction history, find nearby ATMs or cash bank locations, and learn how to manage their prepaid card.

### *Financial Inclusion Forum<sup>79</sup>*

In late 2015 and 2016, Treasury and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) brought together leaders across the U.S., representatives from international governments, and the private and

non-profit sectors to *Financial Inclusion Forums*. These forums sought to foster and expand financial inclusion domestically and internationally and bring more under-served populations into the financial mainstream. Participants identified several opportunities for enhancements in this area, including leveraging human-centered design to build consumer confidence and deliver more effective products and services, additional partnering with the private sector, and better use of technology. Panelists discussed the important roles of agencies in providing data and research to enable market participants to understand what gaps to fill, and innovative new approaches to build financial capability and provide access to the financial system for urban and rural youth, and other populations, including recent immigrants and Native populations.

### *Your Money, Your Goals<sup>80</sup>*

The CFPB designed and promoted this tool to help direct service organizations, like social service agencies and other community-based groups, to help the people they serve become financially empowered. The toolkit is a collection of financial empowerment information and tools that organizations can choose based on the current needs and goals of the people they serve. Since its inception the CFPB's trainings have reached more than 12,000 staff and volunteers serving over 150,000 people. In the coming months, the CFPB will provide *Your Money, Your Goals* toolkits, training, and technical assistance to thirty more organizations and coalitions across the country. Through this initiative, they are expecting to train 5,000 more front-line staff and volunteers this year.

75 <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/tax-preparer-resources>

76 <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.mastercard.directexpress&hl=en%20let>

77 <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/direct-express/id996543802?mt=8>

78 <https://www.treasury.gov/connect/blog/Pages/Direct-Express-Mobile-App-Delivers-Financial-Capability-to-Those-Most-in-Need.aspx>

79 <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/nov-28-2016-usaid-and-treasury-host-second-financial-inclusion-forum>

80 <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/your-money-your-goals/>

### ***CFPB Financial Education Exchange (CFPB FinEx)***<sup>81</sup>

*CFPB FinEx* is an online and in-person information exchange designed to provide financial education practitioners with centralized access to CFPB tools and other financial education resources. CFPB FinEx also facilitates discussion among financial educators and allows the CFPB to gather feedback on financial education tools and approaches. As of September 2016, over 2,000 financial educators have signed up for CFPB FinEx. As part of CFPB FinEx, the CFPB also has convened in-person regional meetings. In these sessions, the CFPB has shared research findings, gathered input, and encouraged peer learning among local financial educators. To date, CFPB FinEx has held meetings in Fort Worth, TX; Baltimore, MD; Philadelphia, PA; and Denver, CO. In addition, CFPB has worked with the regional Federal Reserve Banks to plan meetings in Dallas, TX and Atlanta, GA.

### ***Financial Literacy Update***<sup>82</sup>

The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) releases a bi-monthly e-newsletter that includes information about upcoming financial literacy events, new initiatives of the OCC and other FLEC agencies at the state, tribal and/or local governments, and activities in the nonprofit sector. Each edition of the *Financial Literacy Update* is sent to about 30,000 community development and financial literacy contacts.

### ***National Credit Union Administration: Consumer Assistance Center and Twitter Chats***<sup>83</sup>

NCUA's Consumer Assistance Center provides answers to a number of consumer financial protection

and financial literacy questions. NCUA's Twitter Chats (#NCUAChat) featuring organizations such as the Consumer Federation of America and the Federal Trade Commission reached nearly 1.4 million viewers through social media impressions. Also, through an existing financial literacy collaboration, NCUA and AARP together hosted Twitter chats on topics such as fraud prevention, and provided education informing older adults about credit unions including the cooperative structure, membership eligibility, and NCUA share insurance coverage. In 2016, NCUA also released a new interactive information graphic for consumers to help them understand what it means to save and borrow at a federally insured credit union.

## **VII. Activities for the Year Ahead**

Over the year ahead the FLEC will continue its work consistent with the goals defined in the 2011 *National Strategy for Financial Literacy* and 2016 *Strategy Update*. These activities include: expanding outreach and awareness on existing materials and increasing awareness among targeted populations; integrating financial education where appropriate; supporting financial education infrastructure; and coordinating on research and evaluating and sharing lessons learned. These activities will draw on findings of recent research and assessments to continue to enhance our efforts.

The FLEC expects to review its strategic plan and work plan in 2017 in light of a new Administration. As part of this plan, we will consider whether additional resources are needed to support coordination, or otherwise enhance our financial education effort consistent with current knowledge and understanding of financial capability. The FLEC will also consider whether other actions are needed to streamline, improve, or augment the financial literacy and education programs, grants, and materials of the Federal Government. Finally, the FLEC may consider whether there are areas of overlap and duplication among Federal financial literacy and

81 <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/adult-financial-education/>

82 <https://occ.gov/topics/community-affairs/resource-directories/financial-literacy/index-financial-literacy.html>

83 <http://www.mycreditunion.gov/consumer-assistance-center/Pages/default.aspx>

education activities and propose means of eliminating any such overlap and duplication.

The FLEC will continue to coordinate sharing resources online for the public through *MyMoney.gov* and other channels, to help people make sound financial choices and be better prepared to undertake a wide array of financial steps during their lives. Additionally, the FLEC members will work to deliver resources to targeted audiences—individuals, educators, and other stakeholders—through various channels. The FLEC members will continue to work with stakeholders such as coalitions, nonprofit organizations, libraries, and others that have the capability to reach consumers where they are and to ensure that these organizations have access to financial education tools from the FLEC community.

The *MyMoney.gov* website will continue to use *MyMoney Five* as an organizing tool for the wide array of resources available for individuals, educators, and researchers on the website, as we continue to add useful resources. The FLEC also encourages others to use *MyMoney Five* to organize their own financial education materials.

The FLEC will continue to pursue activities that improve the financial education infrastructure in numerous ways, including improving financial

education components in programs that serve vulnerable youth and their families; preparing students for post-secondary education and to make sound financial decisions during their education; and promoting financial education that helps people prepare for long-term financial security and retirement;

- FLEC members will continue to coordinate on research and share information about research in progress. The FLEC members will continue to support and directly conduct research on topics related to financial education and evaluation of financial education approaches.

The FLEC will continue to find ways to coordinate to avoid duplication and overlap, and work together to enhance delivery of information, resources, and services. In addition, the FLEC will look for ways to simplify content and processes to make financial information more useful to Americans and enhance communications, including through social media, to help more Americans find the resources that can help them attain their financial goals. The FLEC will seek to identify existing resources within agencies to support this work, and consider where resources could be better coordinated and/or pooled, and where coordination with other entities in and outside of government is appropriate.

## Appendix

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### FLEC Public Meetings and Hearings and Use of [www.mymoney.gov](http://www.mymoney.gov) and 800 phone number

#### *Summaries of FLEC Public Meetings and Hearings*

Minutes, webcasts and other information can be found at: <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/financial-education/Pages/meetings.aspx>

#### *Use of [www.mymoney.gov](http://www.mymoney.gov) and 800 phone number*

*Mymoney.gov*, including the new Spanish-language version, [www.mymoney.gov/es](http://www.mymoney.gov/es) (launched April 2016)

- Total Visits for last 6 months (May-Oct): 385,000
- Average # of Visits Per Month: 64,167
- Average # of Visits per Day: 2,139

**1-800-FED-INFO** is the phone number the FLEC uses for information about federal agencies, programs, benefits or services related to financial literacy and education. Information is available in English and Spanish.

**For FY 2016 GSA** reports the following call volume:

#### English

- Consumer Issues - 98,253
- Taxes - 37,023

#### Spanish

- Consumer Issues – 6,241
- Taxes-2,057







**Financial Literacy and Education Commission**

[www.mymoney.gov](http://www.mymoney.gov)