



President's Advisory Council on Financial Literacy Report Issued

The first report of the President's Advisory Council on Financial Literacy was recently released. As the Council looks ahead to 2009 and the leadership of a new Administration, it proposes a series of recommendations. Below is a summary. Please see the full report and 15 recommendations in the "Downloads" section of Jump\$Tart's Web site. <http://www.jumpstart.org/fileindex.cfm>

A. Expand and improve financial education for students from kindergarten through post-secondary education.

1. Mandate financial education students in grades kindergarten through 12.
2. Expand the National Financial Literacy Challenge program
3. Implement the Post-Secondary Financial Education Honor Roll program at colleges and universities.
4. Require college students to take a more comprehensive course in financial literacy (or pass a competency test) as a condition of receiving federally funded or federally guaranteed student loans.
5. Promote availability of financial education resources to use with pre-school and early elementary school children.

B. Support the increasingly important role of employers as providers and conduits of financial education to their employees.

6. Explore tax incentives to encourage employers to provide financial education in the workplace.
7. Implement the Workplace Financial Education Honor Roll program
8. Create an Internet-based resource center for human resource professionals and employers.

C. Increase access to financial services for the millions of unbanked and underserved Americans.

9. Require financial institutions to provide every adult American with access to an electronic, debit card-accessible depository account protected by the FDIC or NCUA.
10. Provide Federal funding for financial literacy programs.

D. Identify and promote a standardized set of skills and behaviors that a financial education program should teach an individual.

11. Standardize definitions for "financial literacy" and "financial education," so that programmatic decisions are based on a common understanding of the terms.
12. Identify and standardize specific skills a person should have upon completion of a comprehensive financial literacy program.

E. Promote more awareness among Americans of the state of financial literacy generally and of their own financial literacy, and dedicate more resources toward educating Americans how to improve on the results.

13. Execute critical research into the state of financial literacy and the most effective measures to increase financial literacy in the United States.
14. Nonprofits should create and distribute self-administered “National Financial Check-Up” that would allow Americans to assess their own financial knowledge.
15. Coordinate active and ongoing media and marketing outreach to promote more widespread knowledge of general financial education concepts.

Florida Coalition News

Florida Jump\$tart Coalition® Featured on NPR

Brenda Hubbard, FJ\$ President, was the guest of “*Gulf Coast Live*”, a radio show on NPR in Fort Myers on Jan. 13, 2009. She informed listeners about the Florida Jumpstart Coalition®, Florida Saves week, the biennial high school survey, and several other financial literacy efforts going on in Florida during the 40-minute interview.

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, February 4, 2009

Asset Development Summit for People with Disabilities

8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Tallahassee

Email: mroush@ndi-inc.org for more information

Friday, February 27, 2009

Deadline for proposals for presentations to be made at the Institute for Financial Literacy Annual Conference in Philadelphia this October. For more information contact Conference@FinancialLit.org or online at: www.FinancialLit.org.

February 22 - March 1, 2009

Florida Saves Week, coordinated by the Florida Department of Financial Services and UF/IFAS Extension. See the 2009 America Saves site for information http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/economics/fsll/edu_saves.html or contact Michael Gutter at msgutter@ufl.edu. Online brochures and flyers are at <http://www.americasaves.org/resources/other.asp>.

March 10

Florida Jump\$tart Coalition Board Meeting

10:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

University of Florida IFAS Extension Office; Kissimmee

March 10

Florida Jump\$tart Coalition Partner/General Membership Meeting

1:00–3:30 p.m.

University of Florida IFAS Extension Office; Kissimmee

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

Consumer Banking Conference: Promoting Financial Stability in the Americas Through Access to Banking

Florida International University, School of Business, Miami

See [Consumer Banking Conference](#)

Friday, March 27, 10 a.m.

Florida Jump\$tart Coalition Board Meeting by conference call

April 2009

National Financial Literacy Month

What is your organization doing? Please send us your information to share with other partners.

April 1, 2009

National Jump\$tart Board, Partners and State Coalition Leaders' Fund Raising Dinner, State Leaders' Meeting, National Committee Meetings

Washington, DC

April 2, 2009

National Jump\$tart General Partners' Meeting and National Board Meeting

Washington, DC

April 21, 2009

Teach a Child to Save Day

National and Florida Bankers Associations; registration starts Feb. 3 at

<http://www.aba.com/ABAEF/TCTSReg.htm>

News Briefs

Financial Education Bill Dies in Committee

(Jan. 5, 2009) – Legislation that aimed to fund financial education for high school students failed to make it out of committee. Called the Young Investor Financial Education Act, HR 7135 would have awarded grants to state educational agencies to support teaching students financial topics such as money management, credit card use, saving, investing and financial planning. Among other provisions, the bill called for using funds to train teachers in financial education coursework. For a look at the bill, visit thomas.loc.gov. –*InvestmentNews.com*

Credit Card Companies Slash Credit Limits

(Jan. 5, 2009) – As if access to credit wasn't already tight, credit card companies are slashing consumer credit lines and closing inactive cards – a move that could harm borrowers' credit scores and restrict access to loans.

About 20 percent of banks reduced credit limits on existing credit cards of prime borrowers and 60 percent of banks lowered limits for nonprime borrowers, according to the Federal Reserve's October survey of senior loan officers.

"We are taking a more aggressive look at accounts to control risk given the current economic environment," said a spokeswoman for Bank of America Corp. "We are closing accounts with zero balances that have been inactive for more than a year and may adjust customers' credit lines up or down", based on "their risk profile and performance," she said.

American Express Co., US Bancorp, Washington Mutual Inc. and Wells Fargo & Co. said they would reduce cardholders' credit limits because of perceived customer risk, such as high balances or late payments on credit cards, according to a July credit card survey by Consumer Action, a consumer education and advocacy group.

These actions not only restrict your borrowing power, but they also can substantially hurt your credit score. About 30 percent of your credit score is based on the percentage of your credit limit you've actually used. A lower credit limit can lead to a higher use ratio and negatively affect your score.

Banks are required to notify customers of changes to credit terms, including fees, interest rates and credit limits. Borrowers should review credit limits on every statement.

Many banks also are closing inactive cards to avoid the liability of keeping credit lines open to people who haven't used them in the past but might tap as financial situations worsen. This also can have a negative affect on your credit score by increasing the ratio of outstanding debt to available credit. A loss of a long-standing credit card also may shorten your credit history. To avoid this situation, consumers should use cards at least once a month "even for a token purpose" and pay the balance in full, suggests Greg McBride, senior financial analyst at Bankrate.com. – *The Wall Street Journal*

Treasury Announces Results of High School Financial Literacy Challenge

(Jan. 6, 2009) – The Treasury Department announced results of the fall National Financial Literacy Challenge, a Web-based contest open to high school students across the country. The department administered the test from Nov. 3 to Dec. 12 to identify and recognize high school students demonstrating knowledge of important personal finance concepts.

The first National Challenge was held in May 2008 and attracted 46,000 students. More than 75,000 students participated in the voluntary exam this round. "We're pleased with the quick growth of the National Challenge and hope it continues, but there is more work to do. The 'challenge' to parents, teachers, school administrators and policy makers across the country is to get effective personal finance education into every classroom, for every student," said Deputy Assistant Secretary for Financial Education Dan Iannicola, Jr.

Students who scored in the top 25th percentile received certificates of recognition and 362 students earned the National Financial Literacy Award medal for demonstrating exceptional levels of financial literacy with perfect or near-perfect scores. In addition to the certificates and medals, each student who obtained a perfect score received a college scholarship from the Charles Schwab Foundation, with an additional financial contribution going to each winning student's school.

Laura Levine, member of the President's Advisory Council and Executive Director of the Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Finance said, "We're proud of the students who excelled on the Challenge and the parents and teachers who taught them about money. The reason the President's Advisory Council recommended implementing the Challenge was to raise awareness of the good work by students and teachers in the field of personal finance and to encourage other schools to follow that example."

The Challenge's 35 questions are correlated to the National Standards in K-12 Personal Finance Education published by the Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Finance in 2007. *Washington, DC; U.S. Treasury Department*

Florida Participation in the Spring High School Financial Literacy Challenge

The results are in! Florida had 3,115 students and came in 5th behind Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, with the total number of students participating in the spring 2008 Challenge. Florida tied New York and Pennsylvania for the most students receiving perfect scores – each had four students. Florida had 27 students in the top 1st percentile and 586 students who scored in the top 25th percentile. Way to go, Florida!

IRS Opens Free Electronic Filing to All

(Jan. 18, 2009) – The IRS recently announced that all taxpayers, regardless of income, will be allowed to file electronically for free this year. Previously, free filing was only available to those making less than \$56,000. Taxpayers filing through the IRS Web site who are not eligible for Free File and are not using commercial tax software or a tax preparer will not get step-by-step help about their tax situation when they e-file. *The Washington Post*

IRS Tells Single Taxpayers How to Claim Joint-Homebuyer Credit

(Jan. 19, 2009) – Congress last year created a tax credit of 10% on the purchase price of a home bought by first-time buyers. Now the IRS has published Notice 2009-12 explaining how to allocate that credit when two or more unmarried people purchase a home together. *The JournalofAccountancy.com*

FDIC Advisory Committee to Explore Strategies for Increasing Access to Financial Mainstream

(Jan. 29, 2009) – The FDIC Advisory Committee on Economic Inclusion (Come-IN) will meet on Feb. 5, 2009, to explore strategies for expanding banking services to the significant number of underserved households. An estimated 10 million households – or almost 10 percent of the U.S. population – do not have bank accounts, while many more are considered "underbanked" as they continue to rely on non-bank providers for financial services, often at a very high cost.

At the meeting, experts from banks, community groups and other organizations will discuss specific approaches for reaching the underserved, including providing financial education, developing innovative lending and asset-building products and services, and promoting community recovery strategies.

"The FDIC's AEI effort has been tremendously successful so far, with nearly 1,000 members and more than 85,000 new bank accounts opened to date," said FDIC Chairman Sheila C. Bair.

The meeting will be open to the general public and the media. It will be held starting 8:30 a.m. at the FDIC, Washington, D.C. To view the meeting agenda, visit <http://www.fdic.gov/about/comein/agendaFeb52009.html>. *Press Release, FDIC*

"Financial Fridays" from National Jump\$tart

Jan. 9

THE CENTSABLES (www.centsables.com) is a first-of-its-kind initiative that teaches kids age 6-12 the financial skills they need for a lifetime of sound money management. THE CENTSABLES team, friendly bankers by day, super-heroes by choice, dispatch evil villains and rescue victims from financial traps, while modeling diversity and pro-social skills to their young audience. The program is built on a multi-media platform, reaching kids in all places through TV, online, newspapers, comics, DVDs, games, clothing, classrooms, plus a proprietary *Banking for Kids* program for partnering financial institutions. THE CENTSABLES project teaches kids banking basics and financial skills they can use from day one to develop good habits and make smart decisions.

Jan. 16

The **Personal Finance Employee Education Foundation** (www.PersonalFinanceFoundation.org) is a not-for-profit charitable organization that promotes the best providers of quality workplace financial education programs. It also conducts research to prove the bottom-line wisdom of providing employees easy access to quality programs that improve personal financial behaviors. They advocate best practices that increase employee financial health *and* employer profits. They offer: 1) Web site resources available at no cost; 2) personal financial wellness scale; 3) tools and expertise to detail ROI for a quality workplace financial program; and 4) newsletter on personal finance.



Jan. 23

The **It's a Habit! Company, Inc.** (www.itsahabit.com) publishes strategic children books, music, lesson plans, and training guides around its main character-Sammy Rabbit! It also conducts strategic live author and character appearances, workshops, and seminars. The IAHC/Sammy motto is: CHANGING CHILDREN AND FAMILY LIVES ONE HABIT AND DIME AT A TIME! Products include: children story and workbooks (perfect Pre-K through 4; beginning readers of all ages; and English language learners), music, coloring books, lesson plans developed by teachers that correlate with standards for reading, writing, math, etc., parent training guides, train-the-trainer training guides, articles, and other promotional products. Services include: live author and character appearances, performances, book signings, etc. that are great for school assemblies, malls, trade fairs, community events, workshops, meetings, dinners, family "reading" nights, after-school programs, family and book festivals.



Jan. 30

The **Society for Financial Education and Professional Development** (www.sfepd.org) is a not-for-profit organization, and its mission is to enhance the level of financial and economic literacy of individuals and households in the United States. The organization develops and presents face-to-face personal financial education seminars and workshops for education institutions, corporate, government and community-based organizations. SFE PD developed a new seminar, *Creating Wealth through Homeownership*. This seminar was offered to college students (e.g., upperclassmen) for the first time during the 2008 spring semester.



For archives of past Financial Fridays, see the Download tab at www.jumpstart.org.

News and Recent Events From Our Partners

Free Financial Booklet from UF IFAS

Need a great financial resource for clients and students? The **University of Florida IFAS Extension Service** is offering their booklet, *Managing in Tough Times*, online at <http://fyics.ifas.ufl.edu/>.

Financial Literacy Training Offered to St. Johns County Students

Financial Literacy for Teens is a new initiative by the **Florida Institute of CPAs** done in collaboration with the St. Johns County Public Library system. Five workshops aimed at high school through college students were conducted over the holidays. The program has been successful – more than 100 students were turned away from the pilot last August. The four-hour workshop was developed and taught by local CPAs. Plans are under way to expand the program to interested libraries statewide during the summer months.

Cypress Bay High School Financial Literacy Project

The Cypress Bay High School DECA club (student association for management, marketing, and entrepreneurship) recently completed a school-wide project on financial literacy. Their campaign called "SURFER"- Students Understanding Real Finance and Economic Responsibility - included interactive presentations by students and guest speakers, weekly activities in the courtyard, student assemblies, a scholarship award to a student to begin their savings account, bank days to give students the opportunity to open savings accounts on campus, introduced a new financial vocabulary each week, developed pamphlets with information on leading financially fit lives, and more. Volunteers from **Colonial Bank**, **Bank of America**, and the **Florida Institute of CPAs** assisted with their project.

Welcome New Partners

Florida Council on Economic Education

1211 North West Shore Blvd., Suite #305
Tampa, FL 33607
(813) 289-8489
Clinton J. Mueller, Executive Director
cmueller@fcee.org

Life Coach

6510 Letohatchee Street
Panama City, FL 32404
(850) 596-8554
Melissa L. Strawser, Life Coach
mlstrawser@knology.net

Regions

51 West Bay Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202
(904) 281-7675
George Owen, Vice President
george.owen@regions.com

Financial Literacy Resources

Are You Ready for Some Financial Football?

With the Super Bowl in Tampa still fresh on people's minds, why not interest students in playing Financial Football? Jointly developed by the National Football League and Visa, the interactive game teaches personal financial management skills to young adults. It can be played free on the Web or downloaded to your cell phone and played at any time.

Financial Football combines the structure and rules of the NFL with financial education questions of varying difficulty. You can play it with your kids one-on-one or by forming teams. Racing against



the clock, teams gain yards and score points for answering questions correctly, and lose yardage for wrong answers. Players pick home and visitor teams from among the 32 AFC and NFC teams, then choose the game length and level of question difficulty to make the game either more or less challenging. There is a standard edition for teenagers and a more advanced version for college-age young adults.

Since its introduction a few seasons ago, Financial Football has caught on. The online version has been downloaded more than 200,000 times and 19 state governments have distributed the game to all their high schools, making it a component of their financial education curricula.

This education program was distributed to every public high school in Florida. To learn more about Financial Football, play the game or download a free copy, go to Visa's free personal financial management site, Practical Money Skills for Life (www.practicalmoneyskills.com/football).

Wall Street Journal Videos on the Financial Crisis

The Wall Street Journal has made available online, three short videos (about 25 minutes total) that describe the 2008 economic/financial meltdown. The videos (see link below) make great educational points and are suitable from high school through adult. <http://online.wsj.com/video/end-of-wall-street-what-happened/1F02EFEC-569A-4FED-9BF9-D89CD6E57AD0.html>

Lesson Plans on Demand

Educators, take advantage of Practical Money Skills' free online curriculum. Whether you're introducing money to young children or budgeting strategies for college students, these easy downloads include teacher's guides, student activities, and presentation materials. [See Plans.](#)

Federal Financial Regulators Issue Revised Identity Theft Brochure

The federal bank, credit union, and thrift regulatory agencies announced publication of a revised identity theft brochure – *You Have the Power to Stop Identity Theft* – to assist consumers in preventing and resolving identity theft.

The updated brochure focuses primarily on Internet "phishing" by describing how phishing works, offering ways to protect against identity theft, and detailing steps to follow for victims of identity theft. The brochure includes contact information for three major credit bureaus, where to report suspicious e-mails, and where to access additional information.

The [ID Theft Brochure](#) is available to download from the Web sites of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, National Credit Union Administration, and Office of Thrift Supervision.

CFO Sink Announces Free Tax-Preparation Sites for Eligible Taxpayers

Millions of low- to moderate-income workers in Florida may be eligible to receive Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), as well as free help preparing their tax returns. The IRS estimates that 20 percent to 25 percent of eligible taxpayers fail to claim the credit, which could put as much as \$4,824 into the pockets of a family with two children, send as much as \$2,917 to a family with one child, or provide \$438 for a worker with no children. The EITC is the federal government's largest program benefiting lower earning workers.

CFO Sink also said some individuals and families may qualify for the credit for the first time because of unemployment or other changes in their financial, marital or parental status during the past year. Taxpayers with the earnings of or below \$38,646 (\$41,646 if married filing jointly) for families with two or more children; \$33,995 (\$36,995 married filing jointly) for families with one child; or \$12,880 (\$15,880 married filing jointly) if there are no children should check to see if they qualify. The EITC is a valuable but complex tax break. Free help is available to determine eligibility and assist eligible Floridians with tax preparation at volunteer tax assistance sites or at a local IRS Taxpayer Assistance Center.

The locations and hours of operations of free tax preparation sites statewide are available online at <http://www.MyFloridaCFO.com/docs/2009FLSitesCty.pdf>.

People visiting the tax preparation sites should arrive prepared with the following items:

- Valid driver's license or photo identification (self and spouse, if applicable);
- Social Security cards for all persons listed on the return;
- Dates of birth for all persons listed on the return;
- All income statements: Forms W-2, 1099, Social Security, unemployment, or other benefits statements, self-employment records and any documents showing taxes withheld;
- Dependent child care information: payee's name, address and SSN or TIN;
- Proof of account at financial institution for direct debit or deposit (i.e. cancelled/voided check or bank statement);
- Prior year tax return (if available); and
- Any other pertinent documents or papers.

To file taxes electronically on a married filing joint tax return, both spouses must be present to sign the required forms.

Financial Literacy Research

“Women on Their Own” in Worse Financial Conditions than Other Americans

Women have been facing greater financial challenges than other Americans, according to the Consumer Federation of American (CFA). The CFA has conducted an analysis of the most recent data collected by the Federal Reserve Board's authoritative Survey of Consumer Finances. The majority of respondents to this survey were single women who are the head of their household. The survey revealed:

- Only 33 percent of women say they save regularly.
- The median household income of single women is \$22,592 while that of all households is \$43,130.
- The wealth-gap is even greater than the income-gap. Single women have a median net worth of \$32,850 compared to \$93,001 for all households.
- Only 47 percent of never married, divorced, or separated women had a savings account or money market deposit account, and those who did typically held only \$1,100 in these accounts.
- Only 50 percent of divorced or separated women had a savings account or MMDA, and those who did typically held only \$1,600 in these accounts.

Survey results provided by CFA/America Saves.

Treasury Establishes Research Priorities for Financial Literacy and Education

As part of the implementation of the Financial Literacy and Education Commission's National Strategy, nearly 30 academics from the Land-Grant University System and other private and public institutions framed a research agenda for financial literacy and education at a two-day, invitation-only work session in Washington, DC, Oct. 6-7, 2008. The U.S. Departments of Treasury and Agriculture convened the symposium. Experts in behavioral and consumer economics, financial risk assessment, and financial literacy program evaluation shared central research findings, identified gaps in the literature, and prioritized relevant research needed to inform policy, education, and practice leading to more financially secure Americans. The findings of the symposium are posted at <http://www.treas.gov/offices/domestic-finance/financial-institution/fin-education/commission/activities.shtml>. At the bottom of the page you will find the complete report and the "10 research priorities" summary. – *Department of Treasury*

Volunteer Opportunities

Do you need assistance with a project or outreach effort? Let us know.

Florida Jump\$tart Coalition® for Personal Financial Literacy, Inc.



Inquiries or articles may be sent to:

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This newsletter is published monthly by the Florida Jump\$tart Coalition® for Personal Financial Literacy, Inc. and is sent to active partners. Previous issues of the newsletter can be found on the Web site.

Please contact us if you believe that you are receiving this newsletter by mistake, are a current Partner that has not been receiving the newsletter, or wish to update your contact information. Any additional concerns or questions should be directed to FLJumpstart@ficpa.org.

This newsletter is one of our primary communication tools. We invite Partners to submit articles, photos, or news briefs about your innovative ideas, research, activities and events. Financial education is rapidly growing in Florida. We need your help to stay on top of trends and information. Please submit your information to FLJumpstart@ficpa.org.

All articles are subject to editing. Statements of fact and opinion are the responsibility of the author(s) and do not imply an opinion on the part of the Board or Partners of the Florida Jump\$tart Coalition®.