
Notes from the March 2, 2021 Financial Education Advisory Team Meeting

Team Members

Present:

State Treasurer Tobias Read, Chair
Laura Aguirre, Financial Advisory Station, Mexican Consulate
Kate Benedict, Executive Director, Financial Beginnings Oregon
Luke Bonham, Neighborhood Partnerships
Scott Cooper, NeighborImpact
David Carlos Garcia, Neighborhood Partnerships
Alisha Langford, Abeona Group
Brent Hunsberger, Financial Planner, Silver Oak Advisory Group
Gina Huntington, Vice President of Programs, Junior Achievement
George Katsinis, Accredited Financial Counselor - Oregon Military
Erin Moore, Financial Ed Program Manager, OnPoint Community
Credit Union
Juanita Santana, AARP & Prior Retirement Savings Board Member
Karen Saxe, Director of Financial Wellbeing, Dev Northwest
Felicia Wells Thomas, Micro Enterprise Services of Oregon
Chabre Vickers, Community Development Officer, Wells Fargo

Team Members

Absent:

Bill Ihle, CEO & Executive Director, Consumer Credit Counseling
Dave Tovey, Executive Director, Nixyáawii Community Financial
Services (NCFS)

Treasury Staff:

Amy Bates, Communications Director
Meredith Coba, Legislative & Outreach Coordinator
Jennifer Peet, Corporate Governance Director
Sabra Purifoy, Operations Director
Missy Simpson, Executive Coordinator
James Sinks, Financial Education Program Manager
John Valley, Policy & Outreach Director

Speakers:

Treasurer Beth Pearce, Vermont
Treasurer Seth Magaziner, Rhode Island
Treasurer Kimberly Yee, Arizona

Others Present:

Fareed Bailey

Kevin Christianson
Hannah Roehr
Charon Rose
Mark Swenson

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and Remarks

Treasurer Tobias Read welcomed the members of the Advisory Team and thanked them for their willingness to share their expertise. Treasurer Read introduced the Treasurers from Vermont, Rhode Island and Arizona and informed the committee they would be hearing about the recommendations they have based on their experience on how to bolster financial security and literacy.

Agenda Item 2 – Lessons from other states: Treasury Solutions to advance financial literacy

Treasurer Yee, Arizona State Treasurer, shared the struggles and successes she has had with trying to navigate the financial education piece in the K-12 school system. After working with several of their governing boards, were able to look at the Arizona rules through the Board of Education and inserted Financial Education into the Economics required semester class which is now Economics and Financial Education. A governing board at that local school District can determine the percentage to be applied for each of those skills. This last Legislative session Treasurer Yee looked at individuals on TANIF (temporary assistance for needy families), and equipping them to be self-sufficient by preparing them in their work requirements to have an option to also have financial education courses before they get out. The Treasurer's office put together a similar financial education task force made up of experts, looking at vulnerable families, emerging adults, veterans, military families, reaching all 15 counties to get messaging out. The Treasurer's office established a Financial Education Fund, to roll out programs locally to communities. And lastly, Treasurer Yee put into law that the Treasurer's office will have the responsibility to advance the awareness of financial education in Arizona.

Treasurer Beth Pearce, Vermont State Treasurer, gave an overview to the committee on a program former Treasurer Jim Spalding set up in 2007 for financial literacy which had a three-prong approach, advocacy to promote financial literacy to raise awareness, collaboration with our partners, finding and developing those partners, deliver those services and where there was a gap, develop and implement programs while being selective on how it was done. The Treasurer's department also created a Financial Literacy Trust Fund, which passed through legislation, specific language to exempt the fund from procurement processes while still maintaining transparency and have a year-end report to the general assembly. That gave the Treasurer's office flexibility to be able to do the fundraising needed, reaching out to different types of agencies and authorities across the state for fundraising. In 2016, a financial literacy commission was created by the state legislature. The treasurer's office advocated for a set of education standards and were able to establish those standards through the Board of Education, and similar to Arizona, was integrated into two components, math and economics. Another recommendation through the commission was to create a data base of financial literacy

programs and deliver those services efficiently to the community, launching the Financial Literacy Education Website, mymoney.vermont.gov.

Treasurer Magaziner, Rhode Island State Treasurer, put together the Financial Empowerment Roundtable. They meet quarterly, and anybody who is interested in issues of financial literacy or financial empowerment are welcome, which usually includes representatives of the private sector, like banks and credit unions, representatives of the nonprofit organizations, teachers, and representatives of government agencies and other elected officials. In every meeting a few people present on the work their organization is doing and then open discussion to brainstorm and support each other. The Rhode Island Treasury Job Shadow days was created from one of these meetings, which link high schools in Rhode Island with employers in the financial industry, in the private sector, government, and non-profit, with hundreds of students to participate in these job shadow days exposing them to what those career paths would look like. This roundtable also created the state's financial literacy educator of the year program. Our office accepts nominations from all the high schools and middle schools across Rhode Island and recognize one teacher each year. We have reintroduced a bill to ensure every student in Rhode Island graduate having had access to personal finance education. I'm hopeful we will get it over the finish line this year.

Chabre Vickers asked what financial what financial literacy will look like in the states, when you think of legislation or policy level requests or asks coming up, separate from that of education, what has been coming up with those groups? What are you excited about as you look at 2021?

- Treasurer Magaziner mentioned broadening access to low cost financial services including retirement savings. Another area is access to small dollar credit particularly for lower income or any consumers. Using data and more sophisticated algorithms to offer small dollar credit that is more affordable and less likely to trap people into a cycle of debt. Those are some of the areas I am seeing a lot of activity beyond just financial education.
- Treasurer Yee described their AZ 529 Education Savings Plan, which helps families to prepare for the cost of higher education, post high school. In this current legislative session Arizona changed the name of the 529 program since this plan can now be used for vocational education programs, work force development, and apprenticeship programs.
- Treasurer Pearce reported their state is creating programs wrapped around a lifetime of financial well-being like the Green Mountain Secure Retirement Plan and ABLE Plan. As people are coming into the program, giving them the resources to be able to use for self-sufficiency. Their state is looking at ways to reach out to all communities, looking at different languages in their communities and how to reach out to them, housing and homelessness, and how to support those services.

Brent Hunsberger asked what kind of metrics or measurements you have to judge your efforts by?

- Treasurer Magaziner mentioned on financial education specifically, they have started tracking how many courses are offered at each high school on personal finance and how many students graduate having taken one of those courses.

- Treasurer Pearce mentioned having similar types of metrics as Rhode Island. Champlain College has a program which brings in teachers and teaches them financial literacy so they can go out and teach their students.
- Treasurer Yee said their program for adding a financial literacy component in their school's curriculum, has only been two years ago, so they are working on some sort of assessment.

Erin Moore asked what are some successful messages of communication that you've employed to help your programs be successful?

- Treasurer Pearce reported that reaching out and training the trainer, whether it's a parent or a teacher is important, reaching out to our partners. Vermont is a small state, so their organizations work together and analyze the gaps and work with their partners on how to close those gaps.
- Treasurer Magaziner stated their financial empowerment roundtable group is a vital link to the communities they are seeking to serve. There is a good balance of private sector, government, nonprofit and educators. They are ambassadors, a source of ideas, inspiration and getting the word out about initiatives.
- Treasurer Yee stated their task force is made up of a diverse roundtable of individuals who help communicate their ideas out to the various communities across the state.

Treasurer Read asked if any of the Treasurers had any quick words of advice.

- Treasurer Pearce mentioned this is about a lifetime of financial well-being and look at it from a multi-dimensional perspective.
- Treasurer Yee stated you will have wins, but never give up. With every idea, you bring some friends along and grow your effort.
- Treasurer Magaziner stated working hard being inclusive and collaborative and not letting the setbacks get you down. When you try to make big change and have a big impact, it rarely happens in the first try and so the trick is to keep everybody motivated and optimistic.

Agenda Item 3 – Focus Questions

The following questions were discussed by individual panels of the Financial Education Advisory Team members:

- 1) If Treasury considers a more permanent financial education-focused citizen panel, what are three (or more) things to keep in mind – including membership, frequency and focus – that could make it successful?**
 - a) Partners should be integrated by representatives of different community groups throughout the state.
 - b) Members should be influencers and actively working with the communities they represent.
 - c) Partnering with educators and Community Business Organizations (CBO's) that are already doing the work, and engaging with other groups separate from CBO's already doing this work especially with a connection to equity.
 - d) The frequency should be every quarter of the year.

- e) The focus is to provide the limits to the programs in financial education to fulfill the needs that every segment of the population they represent have.
- f) They should have a place to convey trust about the financial system and the communities that they represent.
- g) Promote understanding, learning and right application of well being financial practices, and spread the word about the Treasurer's financial literacy program.
- h) Centering on those that are most vulnerable in our state.
- i) Define outcomes and making sure we have those predefined before we even start.
- j) Knowing the team's perspective and capacity to accept and respond to feedback.
- k) Work with groups who might not have an opportunity to share perspective or informal work they are doing that supports financial empowerment and resiliency.
- l) The fellowship program Financial Beginnings is doing that teaches younger adults their entire curriculum and then the people who are deeply connected in their own communities, often communities of color and communities dispersed across our region, go back and teach those programs.

2) One of the priorities for the new financial education effort is connected to accountability and setting measurable goals. How should we think about metric, and what strategies could help illustrate the effectiveness of our efforts?

- a) Setting up a website with resources that track the metrics and set goals to have them increase over time which could help better define the communication strategy.
- b) Surveying the number of graduates or districts with financial literacy programs or classes, could influence education policy in trying to get financial literacy standardized across the state.
- c) What type of infrastructure do we need in terms of capacity to do the work?
- d) Access to financial literacy by county.
- e) Cultural competency to measure total integrated pieces throughout the system.
- f) Measure collaboration. What type and the quality of the collaboration efforts are taking place across the state so resources can be maximized.
- g) Non-traditional innovative approaches.
- h) Data collection. Who will be the responsible party for collecting the data on all the measures. That will need to be analyzed and reported by racial and ethnic groups and if possible, it should be aggregated to make sure that we identify issues, areas of need, concerns, so always looking to plan into the future.
- i) Data reporting. Make sure there is regular reporting so we can measure and make sure that the progress is being achieved.
- j) Geographic access as well as language access as a key measurable that we can look at.
- k) Tracking numbers of accounts opened, varying types of accounts opened, efforts related to banking.
- l) A clearinghouse of resources as well as connection points to program and services around our community.
- m) Regarding the CFPD Survey, measuring qualitative and quantitative outcomes, like pulling a credit report, understanding the credit report, how to set financial goals, weathering a financial storm both emotionally and monetarily.
- n) The greatest indicator of whether or not we are measuring the right thing, should come directly from those we are aiming to impact. Our gold standard should be connecting directly with members of those vulnerable communities.

- o) Doing simplistic focus groups with interviews to vet our ideas and to see what they think we should be measuring.

Chabre mentioned there are several organizations and communities of color that have already submitted publications that ask and request for different things. There are economic development and financial aspect of what communities are already talking about like Black Oregon, Women's Foundation, The State of the Woman, communities of color in Multnomah county, the unsettling profiles, Reimagine Oregon. Get an understanding of what they specified and are there aspects of what this group could be doing. Reimagine Oregon

One of the proposed priorities is to help advance public policy efforts to bolster financial literacy in Oregon and nationally. What three (or more) priorities or legislation, aside from education-related, could the Treasurer consider supporting?

- a) Finding out about the qualitative and the quality of the success of any program should be included.
- b) Engaging one on one with different entrepreneurs, we have to keep the individual development account (IDA). It has the education as well as results.
- c) On the National level, for an individual with a disability to save inside an ABLE account they have to receive their diagnosis prior to age 26. That is a federal regulation and part of that act, but there are those that don't get diagnosed for whatever reason until they are 27, 28, or 30, and don't have access to save in order to receive the services and support they need.
- d) State based or national, if finding out what is considered an asset. For the disabled demographic, every single thing is considered an asset that can be turned into cash.
- e) Leveraging the community to help with grants for some of the education for younger kids who don't have personal finance right now.
- f) Creating a high school mentor program
- g) Cleaning up the process for setting up savings accounts for children.
- h) Oregon's Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). This is an opportunity to do good for Oregonians and advertise to help people with this credit.
- i) The IDA program is struggling. Should equalize the tax credit to \$1 for \$1 basis or move the whole thing to the general fund which is what advocates are trying to do.
- j) Collecting information about the medical debt in Oregon. If we don't know how much there is in debt, how do we know how to solve the problem.
- k) Credit Building 101. It's not about the money but about the consistency and teaching that through this program.
 - o Kate suggested having one or two of these people share their perspective with this group.
 - o Alisha also suggested having the IDA with disabilities demographic come talk and give feedback to this group.

Next meeting is scheduled for April 6, 2021.