

REPORT ON FINANCIAL LITERACY IN MASSACHUSETTS

A ROADMAP TO ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY -

Since the first day of her administration, Treasurer Deb Goldberg has recognized the intrinsic link between her office's duties and its unique ability to strengthen the economic security of every Massachusetts resident.

One of Treasurer Goldberg's first initiatives in her administration was the creation of the Task Force on Financial Literacy, a group of policymakers, educators, bankers, and advocates responsible for examining the state of financial education in Massachusetts. The Task Force was asked to complete a comprehensive study of access to financial education in Massachusetts, and release a detailed set of actionable recommendations to enhance financial literacy throughout the state.

In approaching this assignment, the Task Force studied three key demographic groups: K-12 students, college students, and adults. The report attempts to identify and summarize the key challenges faced by the studied populations, and offer specific recommendations that are high-quality, actionable, and scalable.

The report concludes that many residents and families simply lack access to and awareness of the tools that they need to manage their money, plan for college, save for retirement, and make sound decisions for their future. However, it also acknowledges numerous financial education resources that already exist in our state, and outlines strategies to build upon these efforts.

The recommendations contained in the action plan are designed to have broad impact, reach a diverse range of Massachusetts residents, break down barriers, and create opportunity.

- SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS -

Overarching Recommendations

- 1) *Aggregate, maintain, build upon, and increase accessibility to all financial education activities and initiatives in the state;*
- 2) *Promote a public financial education awareness campaign;*
- 3) *Communicate with stakeholders about the family dynamic principle, and include it in all of the financial literacy programming within the Office of Economic Empowerment.*
- 4) *Work closely with the Legislative Affairs staff at the Office of State Treasurer and Receiver General to monitor and advocate for ongoing legislation related to advancing the goals and recommendations put forth in this report.*

K-12 Recommendations

- 1) *Develop a method of evaluating the personal finance decision-making, knowledge, skills, confidence, and behavior of Massachusetts K-12 students in order to better assess their financial literacy;*
- 2) *Collaborate with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to connect educators with financial education teacher training and professional development points;*
- 3) *Encourage public, private, and non-profit entities to share information, participate in events, and support development of programs that promote financial education among K-12 youth;*
- 4) *Create mechanisms and incentives for the various providers of K-12 financial education to convene regularly, share best practices, and coordinate their activities for school age youth and their families.*

College Recommendations

- 1) *Establish a College Financial Readiness Advisory Group to provide guidance and expertise to the Office of Economic Empowerment as it implements K-12 and College recommendations;*
- 2) *Provide students and their families with information on how to finance and save for college;*
- 3) *Identify and promote informed career exploration within high schools, organizations serving out-of-school youth, and institutions of higher education;*
- 4) *Increase the financial capability of college and college-bound students;*
- 5) *Advocate in support of improving access to college affordability tools, such as financial aid shopping sheets and loan forgiveness programs;*
- 6) *Provide educators and counselors with the tools they need to teach and incorporate financial education into their curriculums and programs.*

Adult Recommendations

- 1) *Create public/private partnerships to expand access to Basic Financial Education in budgeting, banking, use of credit, and consumer education with an emphasis on low-to-moderate income residents;*
- 2) *Identify and mobilize volunteer networks to provide financial education in communities and places of employment with a particular focus on low income residents, first generation immigrants, women, veterans, and seniors;*
- 3) *Expand access to specific Transactional Financial Education (or “Just in Time”) and Advanced Individual Financial Coaching for individuals with complex financial issues;*
- 4) *Work with the Office of Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) to connect their constituency with reliable financial education, resources, and services;*
- 5) *Promote financial education for women to enhance economic standing with a focus on wage equality and the tools they need to be financially successful;*
- 6) *Increase opportunities for non-profit organizations, public agencies, and colleges to provide financial education to the Military, Veteran, Family and Survivor Community (MVFSC);*
- 7) *Activate public/private partnerships to support local senior meeting places to strengthen their reach into the community and support the education and counseling that best serve at risk elders;*
- 8) *Advance financial capability by coordinating with related federal and state agency efforts.*

Get the full report at:
mass.gov/treasury/taskforce