



2022

Governor's Financial Literacy Award Recipients

Awards Recognize Individuals & Organizations for Elevating the Financial Literacy, Capability, and Financial Inclusion of Wisconsin's Residents

Individual Category

Jahnvi Datta, Middleton High School, Verona

Jahnvi Datta, as a student, created "Know Your Dollar," a program that provides free personal finance education to middle schoolers, especially ones in underserved areas. Students and staff reported the course being eye-opening and engaging, and many students reported feeling more confident about personal finance. "Know Your Dollar" has partnered with many youth development organizations in the Madison area. In the past year, "Know Your Dollar" has positively influenced more than 400 students.

Zachary L. Hancock, Marine Credit Union, La Crosse

Zachary Hancock works as a senior loan officer and certified Consumer Financial Protection Bureau financial coach with Marine Credit Union in La Crosse. As a Marine Credit Union foundation volunteer, Zachary helped co-create a financial education course focused on personal finances to help prevent recidivism and serve an underserved group of individuals. This course, taught through a collaboration with Western Technical College's "Project Proven Program," allows students the opportunity to receive credit, defined as "credit for prior learning," in personal finance while incarcerated.

Brenda Mears, Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton

Brenda Mears is a business and economics teacher. Her personal finance classes have become a staple for seniors at Fox Valley Lutheran High School. Brenda developed the course and, although it is not a requirement for graduation, over 60% of seniors over the past five years have enrolled. Having both a regular and college-level course offering has allowed for financial literacy inclusion at all academic levels. Brenda has established a strong network with businesses in the community. She often brings in business owners as guest speakers in her class.

Terry Patterson-Taylor, Wisconsin Women’s Business Initiative Corporation, Milwaukee

Terry Patterson-Taylor holds a Wisconsin license in certified public accounting and advanced practice in social work. She uses this expertise to provide a more therapeutic approach to financial counseling. The Wisconsin Women’s Business Initiative Corporation had more than 165 adult graduates of the “Make Your Money Talk” personal money management series. Terry was instrumental in opening over 80 match savings accounts and providing 475 hours of individualized, one-on-one counseling. Terry helps individuals be more strategic with their entrepreneurial and life goals.

Bill Priebe, Priebe Family Foundation, Milwaukee

Bill Priebe is a longtime supporter and champion of SecureFutures, a leading nonprofit organization promoting teen financial literacy. Bill has given of his time and talent as a classroom volunteer, investment conference speaker, and advisory council member. Bill was a key financial supporter of “Money Coach,” a program that helps students develop strong money management habits and long-term capability. Of students surveyed, 97% said they now have a bank account, 68% track expenses, and 75% regularly use a budget.

Sharon D. Robinson, City of Milwaukee, Department of Administration, Milwaukee

Sharon Robinson led the City of Milwaukee’s efforts to create and launch two educational and financial literacy programs influencing the lives of hundreds of Milwaukee area students and their families. The “I Have a Dream Milwaukee” program encourages classrooms of children who would never think of college as an option to not only think of it, but make it happen. Sharon led the city’s efforts to create “Fund My Future Milwaukee,” a program that provides children’s savings accounts to help low-income youth jump start their savings in the early school years.

Vicky Selkowe, City of Racine, Racine

Vicky Selkowe is the manager of strategic initiatives and community partnerships for the City of Racine, and in that role, she was instrumental in bringing a Financial Empowerment Center to the City of Racine by receiving a “Cities for Financial Empowerment” grant. The center has positively influenced individuals and families in Racine with their mission to create access and equity to often underserved populations. Under Vicki’s leadership and commitment to the Financial Empowerment Center and the City of Racine, 130 people were served in 2022.

Organization Category

Brothers Infrastructure Group Construction, Milwaukee

The Brothers Infrastructure Group Construction firm created a model for a 16-week construction education and financial literacy program for underserved and unrepresented individuals. Participants were provided financial literacy training on how money works, the importance of saving, and other personal finance matters. The Brothers Infrastructure Group Construction firm partnered with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections to make the program available to individuals who are in the process of re-entry post incarceration. The program has already helped 75 individuals.

Marine Credit Union Foundation, La Crosse

Marine Credit Union Foundation created “Finding HOME,” a new program that is a resource-intensive, long-term financial education and homeownership program designed for people who typically fall through the cracks of existing homeownership programs. “Finding HOME” is free and consists of thorough one-on-one financial coaching, educational courses, and resource navigation assistance. Graduates of “Finding HOME” are guaranteed access to a market-rate mortgage that fits their spending plan. Since May of 2018, 344 households have been served.

Fox Valley Memory Project, Menasha

Fox Valley Memory Project provides training on how to identify and serve individuals with dementia and memory challenges, which are very serious in the financial industry. The training can help mitigate loss due to fraud, elder abuse, and other predatory practices, which can impact an individual’s financial well-being and legacy funds. Fox Valley Memory Project has trained many local businesses and organizations, including restaurants, banks and credit unions, police and emergency services, churches and more, to become a part of this valuable program.

Gundersen Credit Union, La Crosse

Gundersen Credit Union developed a program to assist domestic violence victims with a low interest rate loan that allows victims to get back on their feet. With the low interest rate loans, participants put down payments on apartments, obtained transportation to get to work, and purchased new clothes. They also opened individual checking and savings accounts solely in their own name, and they received credit report reviews and budget assistance, which helped many increase their credit scores.

Ho-Chunk Nation, Black River Falls

The Ho-Chunk Nation adopted and implemented a requirement that all young members complete a financial literacy program before they turn 18 years old. A comprehensive program was developed and is delivered via an online education platform that provides culturally relevant content to help teach participants key concepts about financial literacy. Participants must complete 14 courses and pass a 75-question final exam. Ho-Chunk Nation also created a career and college readiness preparation program for youth known as “The Good Life” program.

Prime Financial Credit Union, Cudahy

Prime Financial Credit Union is committed to serving the Hispanic community, specifically those who do not have a social security number. Over 30% of Prime Financial Credit Union’s employees are bilingual, providing trusted financial counseling to assist in first-time auto loans and home loans. As certified acceptance agents for the IRS, Prime Financial Credit Union assisted 82 individuals in obtaining a traditional savings or checking account. Since 2018, Prime Financial Credit Union has not had any reportable delinquency or losses on mortgages to individuals with individual taxpayer identification numbers.

The Wisconsin Credit Union League, Saver’s Sweepstakes[®], Madison

The Wisconsin Credit Union League’s Saver’s Sweepstakes[®] is a prize-linked savings account offered by Wisconsin credit unions that lets consumers earn entries into drawings for cash prizes by making deposits into qualified savings accounts. Incentivizing regular saving and building a savings account directly helps to reverse the continued findings that a substantial portion of consumers cannot afford a \$400 emergency expense. As of October 2022, there were 14,895 Saver’s Sweepstakes[®] accounts collectively saving over \$30 million.

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension, Encouraging Financial Conversations Training Curriculum, West Bend

The Encouraging Financial Conversations training curriculum is a six-session series that equips social workers and other helping professionals with tools to help them better meet the financial needs of their clients. The program team consists of extension financial educators, financial security program managers, and financial capability specialists. Over 300 professionals have received training since November 2020.

Wisconsin Coalition on Student Debt and Ascendium Education Group, Wisconsin Student Loan Help Hotline, Madison

The Wisconsin Coalition on Student Debt partnered with Ascendium Education Group to develop and launch the Wisconsin Student Loan Help Hotline. The hotline provides student loan borrowers with counseling services empowering them to maximize their federal student loan relief benefits, which were changing quickly during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, hundreds of borrowers were given assistance to ensure their student loans were in good standing. The hotline is toll free at (833) 589-0750.

Legacy Category

The legacy award is given to an organization, business, or individual whose purpose and heritage is ingrained in sustained financial literacy and capability efforts, and whose reputation in doing so is held in high regard in serving as a model for others in carrying on the work of supporting financial literacy and expanding opportunities through financial capability and financial inclusion. This lifetime recognition is intended to be conferred only once to recipients.

Sherri Hendrickson, retired educator at Monroe High School, Monroe

Sherri taught personal finance and related classes throughout her 30-year career as a teacher at Monroe High School. She helped generations of students build their financial literacy and capability skills, giving them the knowledge they needed both to make better short-term financial decisions and to achieve substantially higher net worth in the long-term. Sherri was instrumental in making financial literacy courses a graduation requirement at Monroe High School. She was a long-term participant in the “Finance and Investment Challenge Bowl,” bringing her students to the first competition at Blackhawk Technical College back in 2003 and not missing an annual tournament until retiring in 2021.

Patrick W. Kubeny, Rhinelander High School, Rhinelander

Patrick has spent the last 30 school years consistently and passionately promoting financial literacy education to students, district administrators, state legislators, and community business leaders. Patrick was responsible for adding a personal finance class as a graduation requirement at Rhinelander High School, which is not a small feat. Patrick has made a positive impact on thousands of students at Rhinelander High School. This work has had a substantial force-multiplier effect as those students became members in the community with their own careers, families, homes, assets, and liabilities.

Acts Housing, Milwaukee

Acts Housing is a nonprofit that provides homeownership programs. Since 1995, Acts Housing has had a long legacy of providing families in Wisconsin with a strong financial education, technical assistance, and lending partners willing to work hard to make homeownership a reality in a competitive market. Acts Housing helps families plan and implement home rehabilitation with a focus on reclaiming vacant foreclosures. In 2021, more than 1,600 families received financial education and over 300 owner-occupied homes were sold.

Bank On Greater Milwaukee, Milwaukee

Bank On Greater Milwaukee is a collaboration between financial institutions, community-based organizations, and local government. The collaborative is working to connect people to safe, affordable, and certified banking accounts. There are over 5,000 certified accounts. Bank On Greater Milwaukee members also offer services and educational resources that help empower people and families to improve their financial capability, health, and independence.

Wisconsin Bankers Foundation, Madison

Since its inception in 2015, the Wisconsin Bankers Foundation has spearheaded the annual “Reading Raises Interest Kits” program, building upon decades of success of the initiative by the Wisconsin Bankers Association. The program provides banker volunteers with relevant material, free of charge, to present in elementary school classrooms in conjunction with National Teach Children to Save Day every April. As a result, more than 140 presentations were made in classrooms spanning across Wisconsin, reaching more than 4,400 students.