

Most Americans are not prepared for their financial futures. Many rely on sales-oriented information to make decisions concerning significant resources. Failure to attain financial goals such as an economically secure retirement is a threat to our communities and to our state's financial well-being. Timely, researched-based, unbiased information and programs are needed to help individuals plan for financial security in later life.

How is NDSU Extension responding to the need?

Beginning in 2002, a series of 14 packaged programs have been developed to assist North Dakotans in increasing their financial security. The lessons include:

- Take the Road to Financial Security
- Money Attitudes
- Values and Goals
- Communicating About Money and Money Issues
- North Dakota Saves
- Basics of Saving and Investing
- Basics of Bonds
- Welcome to Wall Street
- Mutual Fundamentals
- Starting an Investment
- Club Critical Conversations About Long Term Care
- North Dakotans Saving for Education
- Forecasting Retirement Income and Expense
- Final Wishes Planning for North Dakotans

To date, more than 3,500 North Dakotans have participated in one or more of the 14 lessons. Participants have noted the changes listed to the right in behaviors, attitudes and knowledge.

NDSU
Extension Service

Financial *in Later Life* SECURITY

A Cooperative Extension Initiative

North Dakota Saves

The majority of those participating in an evaluation of the ND Saves program learned about the America Saves project (73.7%) learned how setting "SMART" goals can help dreams become reality (76.3%), found new ways to save money (79%), and had a better understanding of compound interest and the time value of money (79% and 65.8%, respectively). Nearly one-fifth of the sample (18.4%) had joined the America Saves Campaign and 13.2% expressed an interest in serving on a local or area "North Dakota Saves coalition.

Basics of Saving and Investing

The Basics of Saving and Investing program was successful in meeting its objectives. Over 80% of the participants completing the survey learned the difference between saving and investing (81.8%), understood the investment "pyramid" and the risk/reward trade off of different types of investments (60.6%), better understood the "time value of money" (66.6%), better understood the importance of diversification (87.9%) and had a better understanding of how personal goals, time horizon, risk tolerance and tax bracket affect their savings and investment choices (60.6%) as a result of program participation.

Basics of Bonds

Evaluation results for the Basics of Bonds were perhaps the most striking. Over eighty percent of the evaluation respondents (81.6%) better understood the basic principles of bond investing as a result of participating in this program. In addition, over eighty percent also were more aware of the various types of bonds (85.8%), better understood the risks and rewards of bond investing (83.7%), and better understood the terminology related to bonds (81.6%). Sixty six percent of the participants had bond investments, over half held US savings bonds, about 4% held US Treasury Bills, 12% municipal bonds, 6.5% corporate bonds and about 8% other types of bonds. Over half of the participants (53.8%) planned to learn more about bonds and possibly add them to their portfolios.

North Dakotans Saving for Education as a result of participating in the educational materials on the website

- More than 86% said their knowledge of saving for postsecondary education had increased.
- More than 76% said they will discuss saving for future education expenses with their family.
- Nearly 86% said they have a better understanding of the savings options available for education saving dollars
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- More than 80% know where to find current and accurate information regarding post secondary education planning