

# IDAHO



LaRaye O'Brien, ICUL; First Lady Lori Otter; Valerie Brooks, ICUL

## Statistics to date: (Since 2006)

- ▶ **38,405** students have been reached
- ▶ **4,000** inmates in Idaho correctional facilities have been reached
- ▶ **22** teacher-training sessions taught throughout the state
- ▶ **440** high school teachers have been trained
- ▶ **41** out of **44** counties are using NEFE in their schools
- ▶ All of Idaho Department of Correction facilities (that have educational programs) use the program
- ▶ About half of Idaho credit unions have sent at least one staff member to a training session

## Outcomes:

- ▶ **97%** of teachers agree, "After attending this workshop, my capacity to teach personal finance has been strengthened."
- ▶ **60%** of students said they increased their knowledge about credit costs, auto insurance, and investments.
- ▶ **91%** of students gained confidence in money decisions and believe this knowledge will help them in their future.

## In the Spotlight:

NEFE, through ICUL and the University of Idaho Extension, has provided HSFPP Student Guides that have an estimated value of more than \$43,000 to Idaho teachers and youth leaders. ICUL and Idaho credit unions have leveraged an additional \$56,000 of in-kind contributions to implement teacher education.

Most high school graduates lack basic personal finance skills. In a 2008 JumpStart Coalition for Financial Literacy survey ([www.jumpstart.org](http://www.jumpstart.org)) high school seniors answered only 48.3% of questions correctly. Without crucial financial management knowledge and skills, credit unions in Idaho and the Idaho Credit Union League (ICUL) realized the future for Idaho's youths was at risk.

In response, Idaho's credit unions, ICUL and the University of Idaho Extension teamed together to make financial education a state priority. The curriculum used is the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) High School Financial Planning Program (HSFPP). The initiative was accelerated by the endorsement of Idaho's First Lady, Lori Otter, a professional educator. Otter became the program's on-air spokesperson and provided taped ads to spread word about the initiative throughout the state.

Otter's endorsement made it much easier to get others to support the program as well, says LaRaye O'Brien, Communication Specialist with the league, including the Department of Education and the state legislature. O'Brien made presentations to the Idaho House and Senate Education committees and the House Business Committee, where she emphasized the importance of financial education. "In turn," says O'Brien, "the legislators talked it up with their constituents and we were off and running."

With the help of an Innovation Grant from the National Credit Union Foundation, the league was able to hire a public relations firm that arranged for extensive media coverage to spread the word about the free workshops. Since 2006, ICUL and the University of Idaho

Extension have developed and led 22 one-day workshops for 440 high school teachers and other educators from 41 of the 44 Idaho counties. The seven-unit curriculum, which is interactive and designed for youth, matches Idaho's educational standards



for teaching in economics, mathematics of personal finance, and family and consumer sciences. Workshop participants, in turn, have taught the curriculum to 38,405 students in schools, church groups, Indian reservations, women's shelters and other settings throughout Idaho, including more than 4,000 inmates in Idaho correctional facilities.

"We can break the cycle of financial illiteracy if we can teach our youth about personal finance, and they teach their youth and so on," says O'Brien. "But we've had people from all walks of life attend," she says. "A builder noticed that his younger employees were struggling with their budgets and finances. He took the course so he could teach them and others in the community. Correctional facilities also use the curriculum for their inmates who will someday return to life outside their walls in hopes that increased financial skills will lead to lower recidivism rates."



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