



Securities Division and the AFCPE Announce New Financial Education Program

The Division of Securities is proud to partner with the Association for Financial Counseling & Planning Education (AFCPE) on a new statewide program called “[Building the Bridge to Investor Education and Protection for Ohioans](#).” The program is supported by a grant from the Investor Protection Trust.

The program includes several elements:

- A series of three, half-day events where the public can learn about various aspects of financial literacy, including saving and investing.
- A revised documentary series, [When I’m 65](#), produced by Detroit Public Television, which includes two short videos, one of which features our Enforcement chief, Janice Hitzeman, providing tips to avoid fraud. The documentary will be broadcast on various dates this year, so check your local listings for the PBS station near you. You can view the videos at DPTV’s YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPk7jrg-6Fo>.

The first event is May 19 in Columbus at the Fawcett Center at Ohio State hosted by WOSU Public Media from 8:30-11 a.m. The event is free but registration is required; [click this link](#) to register. The other two events are scheduled in Dayton on July 20 and Cleveland on September 14. Look for event details and registration information for these two community programs later this year.

The Division of Securities’ message in this campaign focuses on helping consumers avoid making mistakes that could lead to potential investment fraud.

“Our role as Ohio’s securities regulator is to help investors research investment advisers, stockbrokers and investment products before they invest their money,” said Ohio Securities Commissioner Andrea Seidt. “One of our goals as a state agency is to build awareness among investors about safe financial behavior to help prevent investment fraud. Education is the best defense against Ohioans losing their hard-earned savings to fraudsters. We’re proud to be a supporter of this program because it ties in perfectly with our efforts to educate Ohioans about safe investing.”

As part of the project, a statewide survey was conducted by Public Policy Polling that supports the need for the program. Some interesting statistics came out of the study, but specifically for Securities:

- ***Ohio residents rely more on word of mouth than checking out the background of a financial professional.*** Of those Ohio adults using a financial professional to help with their investments, 61 percent made their decision based on a recommendation from a relative, friend, co-worker or neighbor versus 24 percent who did their own research into the professional’s background and services. While a large share (76 percent) said they checked to see if the person was licensed to do business in Ohio, only 17 percent actually contacted the Ohio Department of Commerce - Securities Division, which is where they would be most likely to verify proper licensing.
- ***Younger investors in Ohio may be more inclined than their elders to check out financial professionals.*** Over half (54 percent) of 18-29 year olds said they contacted the Ohio Department of Commerce - Securities Division, versus just 8 percent of 46-65 year olds. Fewer than one in three (32 percent) of all Ohio adults with financial professionals said they used the FINRA BrokerCheck system to see background information on their financial

professional. Another age gap was evident here: 66 percent of 18-29 year olds said they used BrokerCheck versus just 27 percent of 46-65 year olds.

- ***For those Ohio adults without a financial plan, lack of money, knowledge and trust are major factors.*** Of those in Ohio without a financial plan, one third (34 percent) think they don't have enough money to save or invest for retirement (this is true of 45 percent of 18-29 year olds and only 9 percent of 45-60 year olds), 23 percent don't know enough "to feel comfortable" saving and investing or retirement (the gap here between African Americans and whites is 16 percent versus 34 percent), and 25 percent plan to live on Social Security or other resources. Men are far more likely than women to cite distrust of the markets and financial professionals as their No. 1 reason not to have a plan by a margin of 14 percent versus 3 percent.
- ***Bad information and lack of knowledge may keep Ohioans from seeking financial help.*** Nearly six in 10 Ohio residents (57 percent) thinks it "costs a lot" of use a financial counselor planner. Two in five do not understand the difference between a "financial planner" and a "financial counselor."

"The survey results show that too many Ohio residents believe they cannot find affordable financial counseling," said Rebecca Wiggins, AFCPE executive director. "As a national nonprofit organization, we believe that all individuals and families – regardless of income or background – deserve access to quality professional financial counseling and education. We designed this program to help bridge the gap to investor education and protection, and to connect local professionals and organizations in an effort to create a more inclusive continuum of financial care for Ohioans. Through trusted resources and professionals, including Accredited Financial Counselors, Ohio families will be better equipped to save, invest and plan for retirement."

Westerville, Ohio-based AFCPE would like to replicate the Ohio program in other states by working with Securities agencies around the country to bring the events to their citizens.