

YOUR MONEY, YOUR GOALS

Focus on Native Communities

A companion guide to assist tribal staff and organizations in their work with community members.



Consumer Financial
Protection Bureau

About the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) is a federal government agency created to protect consumers in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. We aim to make consumer financial markets work for consumers, responsible providers, and the economy as a whole. We protect consumers from unfair, deceptive, or abusive practices and take action against companies that break the law. We provide people with information and tools to make smart financial decisions.

In a market that works, the prices, risks, and terms of the deal are clear upfront, so consumers can understand their options and comparison shop. All companies play by the same consumer protection rules and compete fairly on providing quality and service. To achieve this vision, the CFPB works to:

- Empower: We create tools, answer common questions, and provide tips that help consumers navigate their financial choices and shop for the deal that works best for them.
- Enforce: We take action against predatory companies and practices that violate the law, and we have already returned billions of dollars to harmed consumers.
- Educate: We encourage financial education and capability from childhood through retirement, publish research, and educate financial companies about their responsibilities.

What's inside?

About the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau	1
Introduction	5
Native Communities and financial empowerment	11
Cultural and emotional influences on financial decision making	15
Using <i>Your Money, Your Goals</i> in Native Communities.	19
<i>Your Money, Your Goals</i> content modules	29
Native communities tool: Using values to set goals	32
Native communities tool: Savings and asset limits	40
Native communities tool: Making the most of the IIM	46
Native communities tool: Annual planning tool	56
Financial empowerment and elders	71
Native communities tool: Identifying elder financial exploitation	74
Native communities tool: Getting help for elder financial exploitation	78
Native communities tool: Preventing elder financial exploitation	81

Introduction

Focus on Native Communities provides information and tools to help you meaningfully connect *Your Money, Your Goals* to the community members you serve.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) aims to make consumer financial markets work for consumers, responsible providers, and the economy as a whole. It protects consumers from unfair, deceptive, or abusive practices and takes action against companies that break the law. The CFPB seeks to provide people with the information, skills and tools that they need to make smart financial decisions.

Your Money, Your Goals is part of that work. The CFPB launched *Your Money, Your Goals* in 2014 to provide training, information, and tools for frontline staff and volunteers in organizations that work with low-income and economically vulnerable consumers. Those organizations include public and private social services agencies, tribal social service and housing programs, legal aid and pro bono attorney organizations, organizations that engage community volunteers, and organizations that serve workers. Since that time, *Your Money, Your Goals* has been used in nearly every state, and in several Native Communities.

This guide—*Your Money, Your Goals: Focus on Native Communities*—contains additional information, tips, and tools based on the wisdom of tribal staff and organizations that serve Native Communities. Its goal is to meaningfully connect the content and tools in *Your Money, Your Goals* to the Native Communities in which you live and work.

The CFPB designed *Your Money, Your Goals* to provide high quality financial information and tools to help individuals and communities become more financially empowered and self-determined. If they choose to use it, each individual or community decides how to use *Your Money, Your Goals*. You can use the entire toolkit, specific sections or tools within the toolkit, or adapt the toolkit to better serve members of your community.

To understand more about the reasons the CFPB developed *Your Money, Your Goals*, it may be useful to understand how the CFPB got started and how it developed the toolkit.

Creation of *Your Money, Your Goals*

In the summer of 2012, the CFPB's Office of Financial Empowerment started thinking about how it could reach the millions of people in this country with low incomes or limited resources with high quality, unbiased financial information. Its staff saw an opportunity to provide empowering information and tools that strengthen financial skills through intermediary organizations—the staff and volunteers of non-profit, public, and tribal entities. Building on existing, trust-based relationships, community services staff and volunteers could become sources of financial empowerment information and tools that would be relevant to the people they serve.

Your Money, Your Goals toolkit, user guides, and training materials are available at <http://www.consumerfinance.gov>.

To ensure *Your Money, Your Goals* met the needs of these staff, the CFPB tested it in more than two dozen organizations and communities in 2013. Native American organizations were part of the pilot and Four Bands Community Fund in Eagle Butte, SD trained tribal housing staff and local small business counselors to use the toolkit.

In 2014-2015 a national rollout began taking *Your Money, Your Goals* to scale. The Sault Sainte Marie Tribe of the Chippewa Indians joined federal agencies, national associations, and local and state governments in a national rollout that trained thousands of frontline staff and volunteers across the country to use *Your Money, Your Goals*. Tribal leaders incorporated traditional practices and storytelling into the training they offered to tribal and local social and human services staff and at a national conference.

In early 2016, representatives from the following tribes and organizations gathered to reflect on the experiences these leaders had in sharing the toolkit and on ways to share additional information that could assist other Native Communities in implementing *Your Money, Your Goals*:

- Citizen Potawatomi Nation
- Chippewa Cree Tribe
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

- Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians
- Seminole Tribe of Florida
- Office of the Special Trustee
- The American Indian Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Outcomes of *Your Money, Your Goals*

Your Money, Your Goals may benefit individuals and families in your community by helping them:

- Set goals based on their values.
- Make plans to reach their goals.
- Use cash flow to cover living expenses today and plan for the future.
- Get rid of debt.
- Review credit reports and fix errors.
- Choose the right financial products and services to meet their needs.
- Recognize their consumer rights, how to protect them, and what to do if they have been violated.
- Protect elders from financial exploitation.

Your Money, Your Goals may also provide benefits to your community as a whole, by supporting efforts to ensure that:

- Community members are able to take care of their financial needs and obligations and contribute to the community.
- Community members are able to make informed decisions about protecting and growing community assets.
- Community members are better able to protect elders from financial abuse and exploitation.
- Community members are able to make informed decisions about balancing today's needs while planning for the next generation.

In addition, communities that have established a goal of decreasing members' reliance on tribal financial support programs may find tools and information in *Your*

Money, Your Goals they can use as they work toward that goal.

Thank you for considering using the *Your Money, Your Goals* toolkit for your community. This guide includes the following sections to help you adapt its content to effectively empower your members and communities:

- Native Communities and financial empowerment.
- Cultural and emotional influences on financial decision making.
- Using *Your Money, Your Goals* in Native Communities.
- *Your Money, Your Goals* content modules, providing context for the topics covered in each module as well as supplemental tools specially designed for use in Native Communities.
- Special module on financial empowerment and elders.

Native Communities and financial empowerment

Financial empowerment ensures people have unbiased information, so they can use their financial resources to increase self-determination and reach their goals.

Your Money, Your Goals is a financial empowerment toolkit. To understand *Your Money, Your Goals*, it's important to understand the definition of financial empowerment and the concept of a toolkit.

What is financial empowerment?

Financial empowerment first provides people with information and opportunities to build skills. This is the groundwork that equips them to make informed choices and then transform those choices into actions to reach their own financial goals. Financial empowerment is about ensuring people know how to see the advantages and disadvantages to financial products and services—like bank and credit union accounts, prepaid cards, credit cards, or loans—and make decisions that are best for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Financially empowered people know where to get help with their financial challenges and can access and choose financial products and services that meet their needs. This sense of empowerment can build people's confidence that they can effectively steward their financial resources to increase self-determination and reach their goals.

Being knowledgeable and confident in your own approach to money means that you can better help people in your community face their money issues. You can help them use their financial resources to live today while planning for tomorrow and the next generation.

The *Your Money, Your Goals* toolkit is designed to do just that—help you enhance your own knowledge and skills so you can help people in your community.

What is a toolkit?

A toolkit is different from a curriculum. A curriculum helps you learn about a set of related topics, and you generally learn it from beginning to end.

A toolkit has information and tools that can be used in any order based on the problem you are trying to fix—just like a tool box. If you are hanging a picture, you may only use a hammer. But if you are trying to build a house, you'll use a hammer, level, saw, drill, and so on. You use the tools you need in the order you need them to get the job done.

When you use *Your Money, Your Goals*, the tool or tools you use will depend on the issue you're addressing. You will be equipped with tools to help understand peoples' goals and provide them with specific information and tools they need at that moment in their lives. That is the way *Your Money, Your Goals* can help build empowerment and self-determination.

Cultural and emotional influences on financial decision making

Financial empowerment, approached with an awareness of traditions of resource stewardship and sustainability, can connect these traditions to financial decision-making.

Your Money, Your Goals includes information for users about the cultural and emotional influences on financial decision making. This discussion can take on even more importance in Native communities where traditional community values may seem to conflict with some approaches to financial management.

For example, the U.S. financial system rewards and penalizes *individuals* based on their personal financial decisions, choices, and missteps, especially when it comes to the extension and use of credit. This may clash with a traditional Native American value of viewing assets and resources as shared or communal. This may also conflict with the value of helping one's immediate and extended family with financial resources whenever called upon to do so—the value summed up in the understanding that “whatever is mine is yours.”

But in the U.S. financial system, financial decisions, no matter their intention, ultimately have individual consequences. For example, if someone helps a family member pay her rent, it may leave him without enough money to cover the monthly payment for his car or truck. While this does not mean the person will immediately lose his vehicle, it may mean a negative entry on his credit report. Once accurate negative entries are on a person's credit report, securing other services, credit, rental housing, or, in some states, insurance, may be more difficult and may cost more. It can even affect a person's ability to get a job.

Within Native Communities, it may be helpful to describe money as a resource to *steward*, like the land or water and all that grows and lives there. When taken care

of, it can provide security and other important resources for individuals, families, and the community as a whole. Financial empowerment information and tools can help everyone in the community learn to better steward this resource. When someone is empowered to steward their own financial resources, they may be in a better position to help family and community members, too.

Native Communities have traditions of living in sustainable balance with their surroundings—a value and skill admired by cultures throughout the world. To achieve sustainable balance, people think of the long term when deciding how much of a resource to consume today. This concept is also relevant to financial empowerment. When applied to money, the concept of saving reflects a sustainable balance between the needs of today and the needs of tomorrow.

When financial topics are approached with cultural awareness that conveys respect for mutual support and reciprocity, the process of financial empowerment can take root. When community members learn to more effectively navigate and use financial systems, they can also teach and help others in the community gain this knowledge and develop these skills. They may be able to contribute their time and resources more readily because they have taken care of their individual and family financial needs and obligations.

For many people, and particularly in Native Communities, money is not an end in itself. It's a means to meeting a need, fulfilling a responsibility, or building for a future you've envisioned. It is a resource that can provide for community and family needs today and security and stability for the months and years ahead. If it is well-stewarded, it can also provide the foundation for generations to come.

Using *Your Money, Your Goals* in Native Communities

Your Money, Your Goals can be used in one-on-one or group settings to provide financial empowerment information and tools for anyone in the community..

There are two audiences for *Your Money, Your Goals*:

- Case managers, frontline staff, and volunteers in tribal social services or other government agencies who want to help financially empower the people they serve or strengthen their own financial skills, and
- Community members that may want or need financial empowerment information, skill-building opportunities, and tools.

The four-part introduction to *Your Money, Your Goals* is for you—community services staff members or volunteers. This information can help you prepare to use the toolkit. The four parts of the introduction are:

- **Part 1:** Introduction to the toolkit
- **Part 2:** Understanding the situation
- **Part 3:** Starting the money conversation
- **Part 4:** Emotions, values, and cultures: What's behind our money choices?

Modules 1 through 9 are the content modules and include information on specific topics and tools that members of your community can use. Think of each module as a specific set of tools you can use with community members depending on the situation. The content modules include:

- **Module 1:** Setting goals and planning for large purchases
- **Module 2:** Saving for emergencies, bills and goals
- **Module 3:** Tracking and managing income and benefits
- **Module 4:** Paying bills and other expenses
- **Module 5:** Getting through the month
- **Module 6:** Dealing with debt
- **Module 7:** Understanding credit reports and scores
- **Module 8:** Money services, cards, accounts, and loans: Finding what works for you
- **Module 9:** Protecting your money

Your Money, Your Goals in one-on-one or group settings

The CFPB designed *Your Money, Your Goals* to be used in one-on-one settings or in meetings with families. For example, *Your Money, Your Goals* can support:

- A tribal social service staff member providing case management to individuals in the community.
- An elder mentoring a young adult in the community.
- A Native Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) staff member providing additional financial information and skill building to a prospective small business owner.
- A financial coach helping a community member reach her goals.

Using the toolkit in a one-on-one setting allows staff and volunteers in tribal and community organizations to target the information and tools based on the specific needs of each person or family. Using Tool 1: My Money Picture in Introduction Part 2 can help you understand the needs of each person and figure out which information and tools are the right starting points. *Your Money, Your Goals* also includes tips for starting the money conversation.

Your Money, Your Goals can also be used with small groups or as part of training. You may be able to use the toolkit in a group-based setting at:

- Community or organizational meetings
- Brown bag lunches or a lunch-and-learn series
- Other community training events
- Tribal gatherings

Finally, for communities that already provide financial education workshops, *Your Money, Your Goals* may be a complementary resource. The toolkit can be used to deliver additional training or help translate concepts learned in other financial education training programs to their own specific situations.

To help you with small group classes or providing training to staff and volunteers, you can use the *Your Money, Your Goals* training PowerPoint slide deck. Participatory activities are included for each module to help make group sessions or training dynamic, engaging, and effective.

Integrating *Your Money, Your Goals*

The CFPB created *Your Money, Your Goals* to be integrated into existing services, not to be an add-on program. This means that staff and community volunteers trained to use the toolkit will find ways to introduce financial empowerment into the work they are already doing with clients and community members.

The strongest integration strategies start with the end user in mind:

1. Who will use the toolkit? Who will they use the toolkit with?
2. How will they use the toolkit?
3. What outcomes do you want to achieve through the use of the toolkit? (Outcomes are results that bring about changes or benefits)
4. What content in the toolkit is most important to achieving these outcomes?

Thinking through these questions will help you and your organization in finding the most strategic points of integration for *Your Money, Your Goals*. In our work with dozens of social service organizations across the country, we have seen that case workers who begin utilizing YMYG in their work with clients

increase their confidence to talk about finances and consumer protection. As conversations about financial capability become a routine part of working with clients, over time frontline staff will build their own capacity to provide these services in your community.

Getting support for *Your Money, Your Goals* in your community

By observing organizations that are using *Your Money, Your Goals*, the CFPB has identified factors that lead to success. One key factor is having a high-level of buy-in from community and tribal leaders.

Each community and organization is unique. You and your organization know the leadership structure and how decisions are made and implemented. As you invest time to discuss the benefits of financial empowerment and using *Your Money, Your Goals* with your community leaders, you can work to develop a plan with them and build consensus around integrating financial empowerment into your work.

Implementing *Your Money, Your Goals* in Native Communities

If you decide that you want to implement *Your Money, Your Goals* in your community, the first step will be getting the toolkit and the supplemental guides at www.consumerfinance.gov/your-money-your-goals.

The toolkit is a free, downloadable PDF file, which is available in English and Spanish. The **Implementation guide** and **Creating a referral** guide are also downloadable PDF files. If you will be training other people in your community to use the toolkit, you can download the PowerPoint training presentation. Simply click on the links on this page of the CFPB's website and save them to your computer or print them.

You can also order hardcopy toolkits free of charge online at <http://promotions.usa.gov/cfpbfinemp.html>. Within four to five weeks, your toolkits will come shrink-wrapped, hole-punched, but not bound. You can supply your own large-size binder clips or 1.5-inch binders for the toolkits¹.

Once you have the resources you need to implement *Your Money, Your Goals*, consider the following steps to bring the use of the toolkit to your community.

¹ For questions regarding how to order toolkits or access materials, contact the *Your Money, Your Goals* team at YourMoneyYourGoals@consumerfinance.gov.

Identify a trainer and provide *Your Money, Your Goals* materials

Find a trainer or trainers to facilitate workshops for the staff members and volunteers of tribal organizations that serve your community. Ideally, the trainer will have some experience providing financial education.

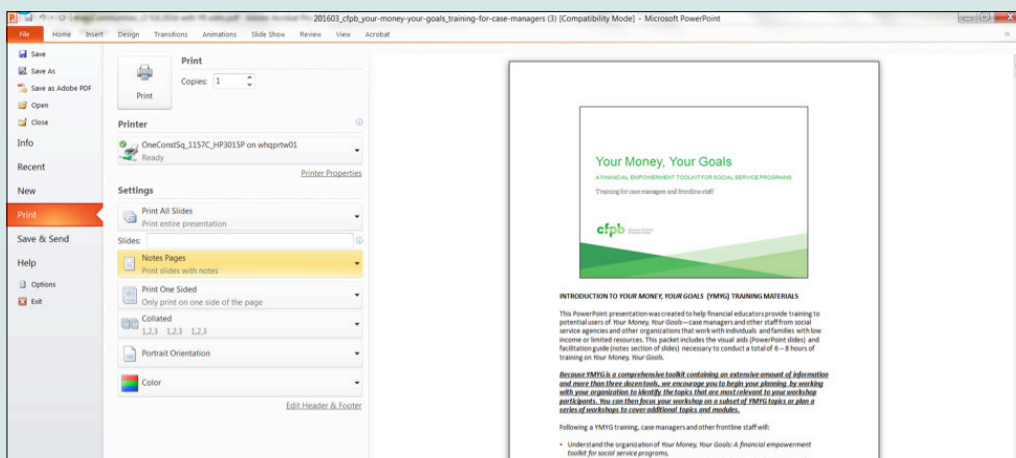
The trainers will need a copy of *Your Money, Your Goals* and the PowerPoint slide deck. The PowerPoint deck includes both slides containing the visual aids for the training and complete training instructions. You'll find these instructions for the trainer in the notes section of the deck. The facilitator instructions include everything the trainer will need to plan for and facilitate the training, including:

- Set up instructions including visual aids, training props, and other important notes.
- Instructions for group activities.
- Question prompts for facilitated discussions.
- Answers to exercises that are a part of the training.
- Scripted narrative to provide clear and concise definitions and summaries.

Printing the training PowerPoint slide deck

To print out the training PowerPoint slide deck, be sure to select the PPT file on the Your Money, Your Goals webpage. Do not select the PDF file.

If you are printing this out for yourself (if you are the trainer) or for the trainer, make sure you select either the "Notes Page" under the "View" command or select "Notes" in the print function when asked what you want to print.



You may also want to provide the trainer with the:

- *Implementation guide*—this resource includes specific steps to help trainers think through planning a training. It also includes tips to gain organizational leadership buy-in.
- *Creating a referral guide*—this resource includes information and tools to develop a financial empowerment resource and referral guide that staff and volunteers can use to connect the people they serve to additional financial empowerment services such as certified nonprofit credit counselors, independent loan specialists, free tax assistance sites sponsored by the IRS, and other financial educators.

You will also want to provide this supplemental guide—*Using Your Money, Your Goals in Native Communities*—to the trainer since it provides content and additional tools for Native Communities that should be included in the training.

Learn and personalize the materials

As a trainer prepares to deliver the *Your Money, Your Goals* toolkit training to frontline staff, it can be helpful to consider:

- Using the tools within the toolkit in advance to become familiar with how they work.
- Adding familiar examples and stories to further illustrate and make the concepts covered locally and culturally relevant. Storytelling can be an especially effective way to connect community members to the topics in *Your Money, Your Goals*. While there is one section in the training that explicitly uses storytelling (as an introduction to student loan debt in Module 6), your trainer can share or invite participants in the training to share stories related to information and tools within each module.
- Modifying the training slide deck to make it more culturally appropriate. Consider adding pictures or images that are meaningful in the community².
- Developing an agenda that reflects community preferences, priorities, and needs. If you were to deliver all the material that's included in the training, it would take a full eight hours. By the time you include breaks and lunch, this would require a full day or day and half of training. It's often not possible for people to take that much time out of their schedules to attend training. Organizations have found many ways to organize *Your Money, Your Goals* training:
 - In a series of lunch-and-learns
 - In two or three half-day sessions

2 If you make any additional changes to the content of the training deck other than adding images that add meaning for your community, please remove the CFPB's logo and the CFPB footer from all of the slides.

- In a series of evening sessions
- During an all-day session on a weekend

Before designing your training, consider what is most important to those who will be trained. Perhaps they only want or need training on four of the modules. Use the **Implementation Guide's Training Planning Tool**³ to help develop a clear plan and agenda for the training.

Get the equipment, supplies, and space needed to host a training

The notes section on the training deck's first slide includes a list of equipment and supplies that you may need for your training. This is a guide, not a list of requirements.

General supplies

These basic supplies are used in most *Your Money, Your Goals* trainings:

- A training space (more information on room set up follows)
- Computer
- LCD projector
- Projection screen or wall
- Small table for projector and computer
- Extension cords if needed
- Easel
- Flip chart pad
- Tape
- Markers for facilitator and participants
- Copies of the toolkit for each participant
- Copies of resource and referral list (use the special guide on Creating a referral guide to develop this resource for the training)

Supplies needed for specific exercises

Depending on which exercises you choose for your training, you might also need:

- Large self-adhesive notes (4" x 6" or 5" x 8")
- Prepared flip charts for group exercises
- Envelopes with role play activity roles for groups of 3 and copies of notes sheets for the observer
- Copies of slides that are used for specific exercises

³ *Your Money, Your Goals: An Implementation Guide* can be found at http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201504_cfpb_ymyg_implementation-guide.pdf.

Training assessments

Some organizations choose to use pre- and post-training assessments. These surveys can help your organization track the number of people you have trained and understand its impact on participants. If you would like to use CFPB-developed surveys, they can be downloaded at www.consumerfinance.gov/your-money-your-goals.

Room set up

Room set up will depend on the space you are able to secure for the training. Ideally, participants will be seated in groups of four to seven around tables so they can work in teams or small groups. If at all possible, avoid theater-style seating or arrangements that do not include a table for participants to work on. The training is meant to encourage small group work and be highly participative and interactive.

Saving on supplies

Getting creative on meeting the needs of your training can help you minimize costs.

For example: What can you do instead of using flip charts?

- Use a chalkboard or whiteboard.
- Use white board cling. This is a roll of whiteboard-like paper that is reusable when you use dry erase markers. The material itself clings to most walls that are not covered with fabric.
- Project a blank PowerPoint slide on the screen and type in responses to brainstorming type activities.
- Make a set of flip charts that are reusable. Laminate prepared flip charts and use dry erase markers on them. This becomes a one-time expense that also reduces paper waste.
- Use paper and tape instead of post-it notes.

Create a budget

To help you plan for a training of 25 people, use this basic budget:

Item	Cost	Notes
Training location	\$0	Use donated space in tribal offices or community rooms
LCD and computer	\$0	Use organizational equipment or borrow it from an organization that has one. LCD Projectors can cost anywhere from \$80 to over \$1,500
Easel	\$0	Borrow or do not use
Flip chart pad	\$50-\$75 for two pads	This will last for 4 - 6 trainings; see options for avoiding use of flip chart paper
Tape	\$6 - \$8/roll	A roll of blue painter's tape will last for 10 or more trainings
Markers	\$24-\$30	36 markers will last for 10 or more trainings
Large self-adhesive notes	\$10	Pack of three; these will last for up to 3 trainings
Copies of slides for group activities	\$2.70 total (Assuming \$.05 per copy and 25 participants)	This will vary based on topics chosen and number of participants. See the instructions for the slides to copy on slide 1 of the training PowerPoint deck.
Toolkits	Order: \$0 Photocopy: \$17.10/ toolkit (340 pages)	You can order free copies of the toolkit at: http://promotions.usa.gov/cfpbfinemp.html Assume a 4-6 week delivery timeframe. The rate for photocopying assumes \$.05/page cost.
Binder clips	\$12	3 boxes of 12 large binder clips at \$4/box.
Total estimated costs per training workshop	\$97 to \$130 not including the cost of photocopying the toolkits	Many of these items will last for multiple trainings. This can reduce the cost per workshop to \$24-\$32.

Your Money, Your Goals content modules

Focus on Native Communities aligns with the nine modules in *Your Money, Your Goals*, and includes a new module on financial empowerment and elders.

This section summarizes each module of the *Your Money, Your Goals* toolkit. Each module focuses on a specific financial topic. This section makes connections between each module's tools and information and Native Communities. For some modules, this section offers supplemental tools to make the concepts within the module especially relevant to Native Communities. The content modules include:

Module 1	Setting goals and planning for large purchases
Module 2	Saving for emergencies, bills, and goals
Module 3	Tracking and managing income and benefits
Module 4	Paying bills and other expenses
Module 5	Getting through the month
Module 6	Dealing with debt
Module 7	Understanding credit reports and scores
Module 8	Money services, cards, accounts, and loans: Finding what works for you
Module 9	Protecting your money

Module 1: Setting goals and planning for large purchases

Goals can be the foundation for building greater self-determination. They provide direction for how to use resources including money.

Overview

Why are goals important? They provide direction for someone’s life. They may help an individual focus on what is most important. Goals can also help people plan how to use their money. In the *Your Money, Your Goals* toolkit, *Module 1: Setting goals and planning for large purchases* describes and uses the **SMART** approach to developing goals—**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ble-to-be-reached, **R**elevant, and **T**ime bound. It also suggests ways to talk to clients about turning their hopes, wants, and dreams into **SMART** goals. Use this module when you want to work with an individual on either short- or long-term goals.

Focus for Native Communities

Setting goals is a foundation for building greater self-determination. When you set goals about those things in your life that are most important to you, your family, and your community, they provide direction for how to use your energy and resources, including your money. Because goals are often based on values, this guide includes a tool to help people in your community reflect on those things that are most important to them.

This module can help you discuss the importance of goal setting with members of your community and provide tools to help them understand the value and process of setting goals.

The information in this module also provides tools to help you discuss anticipating and planning for life events and large purchases. Life events are circumstances that many people experience as part of the circle of life, from birth to death. Some examples are getting a driver’s license and first job, getting the Individual Indian Money (IIM)⁴ or “18-money,” graduating from high school and possibly a job training program or college, getting married, having children, dealing with the death of a family member, and retiring from work.

4 IIM (Individual Indian Money) accounts are held in trust and are managed by the Office of the Special Trustee within the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Large purchases are those things people generally buy once or a few times in their lives that generally require more money than is available from disposable income. Examples include automobiles, homes, major appliances, equipment for enterprises or traditional livelihoods, traditional or cultural dress, or major home repairs. Often these large purchases or life events are interwoven with people's goals.

- Living in harmony with the natural world
- Respect for elders and wisdom
- Clan or community emphasis (not individual)
- Orientation to the present
- The connection of all living things
- Reciprocity
- Spirituality
- Gratitude
- Respect of other beliefs and religions
- Honoring silence

Using the tools

Within Module 1 of the *Your Money, Your Goals* toolkit, you will find three tools:

- **Tool 1: Goal-setting tool.** Help people turn hopes, wishes, and dreams into specific, measurable, able-to-be-reached, relevant, and time bound goals as well as action plans to reach those goals. These can be short term and/or long term.
- **Tool 2: Planning for life events and large purchases.** Help people anticipate and financially prepare for life events and large purchases.
- **Tool 3: Buying a car.** Provide people with basic information about buying a car.
- **Native Communities Tool: Using values to set goals** was developed for use in Native Communities to supplement these tools. You may find that it can help the people you serve develop financial goals that reflect their personal, community, and cultural values.

Using values to set goals

What to do:

Values are the things that people consider most important in their lives. They can be individual principles or shared beliefs within a community or culture. Depending on the individual you are working with, values may be an appropriate place to begin the financial empowerment discussion. A reflection on traditional values may make the information and tools on goal-setting and related topics in module 1 feel more relevant.

What to say:

“Values provide a foundation for your goals. Before you write down goals, reflect on traditional or community values, as well as your own personal values. Doing so can help you steward your resources in ways that uphold those values.”

To access a dynamic and fillable version of this tool, visit: www.consumerfinance.gov/practitioner-resources/your-money-your-goals/companion-guides.



Using values to set goals

Fill out this tool to understand and identify your own values and the values of your community. This exercise can help you use your resources, including money, to uphold those values.

What are some traditional values shared by the members of your community?

How do these traditional values influence you?

How do these traditional values influence your goals?

Use the following tool to identify the top five values most important to you. Rank them in order of most important, from 1 to 5. Put a "1" by the value that is most important to you, a "2" by the value that is the next most important, and so on.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| _____ Comfortable life | _____ Inner harmony |
| _____ Courage | _____ Leisure time |
| _____ Culture and traditions | _____ Living in harmony with nature |
| _____ Family and clan | _____ Professional achievement |
| _____ Financial security | _____ Respect for and from others |
| _____ Freedom | _____ Self-determination |
| _____ Happiness | _____ Self-respect |
| _____ Health | _____ Social recognition or status |
| _____ Independence | |

Looking at community values can provide insight into those forces that most affect decision-making. Looking at your personal values can provide insight into how you use your personal resources and money.

What were your top five values? Did these surprise you?
What do these values say about you?

What are your goals?

Do your goals reflect these values?

How do you think these values affect the way you manage your financial resources?

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Module 2: Saving for emergencies, bills, and goals

Saving is about setting aside resources today so they can be used in the future. It's about balancing your resources to take care of your family and community.

Overview

Module 2 in the *Your Money, Your Goals* toolkit focuses on saving for emergencies, bills, and goals. This module provides you with information and tools to help you discuss saving—setting aside money from income today into a place that is safe and secure. Additionally, emergency savings is discussed with a focus on how covering emergency needs with savings can save money. Use this module to help people save.

Focus for Native Communities

Traditionally, Native Communities lived in sustainable balance with their environment. They only hunted or harvested what was needed to live for today so that resources would continue to be available in the future.

Saving money is based on the same principle: using the amount you need to live for today, but setting aside some money so it is available in the future. Living for today and saving for the future are compatible values—it's about balancing your resources.

For example, for community members whose work is seasonal, setting aside income today to cover the months when there is little or no work ensures sustainability within their household.

People in your community may avoid saving for fear of losing benefits—tribal, state, or federal benefits. Because savings are an asset, the relationship between asset limits and benefits is addressed in this module.

There are various kinds of per capita payments that members of Native Communities may receive. Some of these payments, *but not all*, can be excluded as income, a resource, or an asset when determining your eligibility for a federal assistance program. These programs include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, *Supplemental Security Income*, *housing assistance programs administered by Housing and Urban Development*, or the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. Qualification for government benefits varies by program. Individuals seeking to receive

benefits under them should review the qualifications carefully to determine their entitlement. There are also special federal laws that specify how certain payments are treated for purposes of eligibility for federally-assisted programs. For example:

- Payments from income of lands held in trust or from an eligible tribal trust account: The first \$2,000 you receive from these types of payments in a given year cannot be counted as income⁵.
- Payments from legal settlements with the U.S. government, such as the *Cobell v. Salazar* settlement, cannot be counted.⁶ However, federal assistance programs administered by the Social Security Administration⁷ and Housing and Urban Development⁸, limit how long these payments are excluded from being considered income or a resource for the purposes of eligibility to one year.

If you receive payments like these, it is important to make sure you keep good records of the payments, where they came from, and when you receive them. It will be important for you to show where your income comes from if you are planning to claim that the income should not be counted as a resource or asset when applying for a federal assistance program.

Using the tools

Within this module in *Your Money, Your Goals*, you will find four tools:

- **Tool 1: Savings plan.** Help people make a specific plan for savings.
- **Tool 2: Savings and benefits: Understanding asset limits.** Help people understand how much they can save without affecting their tribal, state, or federal benefits. Remember, you may want to use a tool that has been updated with your tribal and state-specific benefits.
- **Tool 3: Finding a safe place for savings.** Provide people with the benefits and risks of different places to put savings so they can make the choices that are best for them.
- **Tool 4: Increasing your income through tax credits.** Provide people with information on qualifying for the Earned Income Tax Credit. This refundable tax credit can be used to jump-start savings.
- **Native Communities Tool: Savings and asset limits in Native Communities** includes information specific to tribal benefits. Contacts for tribal program administrators or liaisons for federal programs have been included. To make this discussion as relevant as possible for your community, you may want to add your own tribal benefits to this tool.

5 Pub. L. No. 93-134 as amended by 97-458, 98-64 & 103-6625, 25 U.S.C. § 1408

6 Claims Resolution Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-291, 42 U.S.C. § 1305

7 SSA, TN 114 (10-11), <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0500830852>

8 Claims Resolutions Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-291; see also HUD Notice PIH 2013-30, 2, <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=pih2013-30.pdf>.

Savings and asset limits in Native Communities

What to do:

People in your community need to know about asset limits to ensure that they do not jeopardize their public or tribal benefits by saving. Asset limits set maximum amount of personal property and money someone can have and still receive benefits. Not all assets are counted in asset limits and not all benefits programs have asset limits.

This tool supplements Tool 2: Savings and benefits: Understanding asset limits in *Your Money, Your Goals* Module 2: Saving for emergencies, bills, and goals.

Before introducing this tool to people in your community, you may want to consider adding the benefits that are specific to Native Communities generally and your community specifically.

To get started, use the “Additional Resources” listed following the table. These include contacts for tribal program administrators and liaisons. Use information provided by these contacts to complete the table of benefits and assets limits for your community.

You can add this worksheet to **Tool 2: Savings and benefits: Understanding asset limits** in Module 2 of *Your Money, Your Goals* for a complete picture of benefits available in your community.

What to say:

“If you are thinking about saving for emergencies, bills, or your goals, you need to make sure it does not affect your income. Some tribal and federal programs set limits to how much money you can have in savings. And different programs have different limits. Let’s look at this table together to see whether any of these rules apply to your situation. Then you can be empowered to save the amount that is right for you at this time.”

To access a dynamic and fillable version of this tool, visit: www.consumerfinance.gov/practitioner-resources/your-money-your-goals/companion-guides.



Savings and asset limits

This worksheet will help you understand tribal benefits available to your community. Use the information in the “Contacts for tribal benefits programs” column to find out about the available federal benefits for Native Communities. Use the third column to understand the restrictions and asset limits that are specific to your tribal social services system or community.

Benefits and asset limits list for your community

Benefit	Contacts for tribal benefit programs	Information about asset limits specific to your tribe or community
Food programs		
TANF - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families		
Public housing		
LIHEAP - Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program		
Indian health services		
Other tribal benefit:		
Other tribal benefit:		

Additional resources:

- To get specific information about the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) in your community, visit: www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/food-distribution-contacts
- To find out more about your state or tribal TANF program, visit: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/help
- For a list of tribal TANF program contacts, visit: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/resource/tribal-tanf-program-contacts
- To find your regional office for the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Native Programs, visit: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/ih/codetalk/tribalhousing#OSD
- For a list of tribal LIHEAP program contacts, visit: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/liheap-tribal-contact-listing
- To find Indian Health Services in your community, visit: www.ihs.gov

This Your Money, Your Goals: Focus on Native Communities supplement to the Your Money, Your Goals toolkit includes links or references to third-party resources or content that consumers may find helpful. The Bureau does not control or guarantee the accuracy of this outside information. The inclusion of links or references to third-party sites does not necessarily reflect the Bureau's endorsement of the third-party, the views expressed on the outside site, or products or services offered on the outside site. The Bureau has not vetted these third-parties, their content, or any products or services they may offer. There may be other possible entities or resources that are not listed that may also serve your needs.

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Module 3: Tracking and managing income and benefits

Tracking and managing income and benefits empowers people to plan to take care of basic necessities, care for family members, and reach goals.

Overview

Helping people track their spending and income helps them identify whether they are on track to achieve their financial goals. For individuals with little income or few resources, successfully managing their money and benefits can seem overwhelming. Modules 3, 4, and 5 of *Your Money, Your Goals* are designed to help people gain more control over managing their money, to help them to understand the timing of the sources of income and benefits, and to show how using a cash flow approach can help them meet their budget goals. These modules and tools can be used together or separately.

In the toolkit, *Module 3: Tracking and managing income and benefits* helps people clearly identify and track all their resources and includes easy-to-use worksheets. It also provides information on how people might receive income and benefits, including paper check, payroll card, and EBT benefits card.

Focus for Native Communities

While many of your community members may earn income from jobs, businesses they own and operate, or traditional livelihoods, they may also receive income from dividends distributed by the tribal government or money from trust accounts. This money may come from tribal enterprises including gaming, the sale or lease of land and other natural resources owned by the tribe, or because of legal settlements to the tribe.

Called “per capita payments,” these may be distributed in several ways:

- On a regular basis (once per month, two times a year, or annually)
- Periodically
- All at one time (commonly called windfall payments)

As noted in information about savings, some kinds of per capita payments, *but not all*, can be excluded as income, a resource, or an asset when determining your eligibility for a federal assistance program. These programs include Temporary

Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Supplemental Security Income, housing assistance programs administered by Housing and Urban Development, or the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. Qualification for government benefits varies by program. Individuals seeking to receive benefits under them should review the qualifications carefully to determine their entitlement. There are also special federal laws that specify how certain payments are treated for purposes of eligibility for federally-assisted programs. For example:

- Payments from income of lands held in trust or from an eligible tribal trust account: The first \$2,000 you receive from these types of payments in a given year cannot be counted as income.⁹
- Payments from legal settlements with the U.S. government, such as the Cobell v. Salazar settlement, cannot be counted.¹⁰ However, federal assistance programs administered by the Social Security Administration¹¹ and Housing and Urban Development,¹² limit how long these payments are excluded from being considered income or a resource for the purposes of eligibility to one year.

If you receive payments like these, it is important to make sure you keep good records of the payments, where they came from, and when you receive them. It will be important for you to show where your income comes from if you are planning to claim that the income should not be counted as a resource or asset when applying for a federal assistance program.

Per capita payments may also be deposited into Individual Indian Money (IIM) accounts and held in trust. These accounts are managed by the Office of the Special Trustee within the U.S. Department of the Interior.¹³

For minors, IIM accounts may continue to grow until the minor turns 18 years old or is legally emancipated. In some communities, this is called “18-money.” Young people anticipate its arrival, but some do not plan for how they will use it when they receive it. *Native Communities Tool 3: Making the most of the IIM* is designed to help you help young people consider how to make the most of their 18-money.

Module 3 in *Your Money, Your Goals* covers managing and tracking income and benefits. These tribal sources of income may present both opportunities and challenges when planning for the use of income. For example, regular per capita

9 Pub. L. No. 93-134 as amended by 97-458, 98-64 & 103-6625, 25 U.S.C. § 1408

10 Claims Resolution Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-291, 42 U.S.C. § 1305

11 SSA, TN 114 (10-11), <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0500830852>

12 Claims Resolutions Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-291; see also HUD Notice PIH 2013-30, 2, <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=pih2013-30.pdf>.

13 See www.bia.gov/cs/groups/mywvsp/documents/collection/idc010124.pdf

payments may be an advantage to someone whose other income is seasonal or irregular (does not come in at a predictable time or in a predictable amount).

Planning with irregular or annual per capita payments may be harder. But without a plan, individuals may miss the chance to build and grow family and community resources for the future. A plan can help someone use their irregular or annual per capita payments to pay down debt, save for emergencies, help family members, or save for the months when there is little or no income. All of these activities build family and community wealth and security. These funds can also be used to invest in assets that can help create financial security and wealth, such as reliable transportation, additional education or training, tools to engage in traditional livelihoods, or business enterprises.

This module also covers wage garnishment. If someone has unpaid debts, and the creditor sues them for the debt and wins, the creditor may seek to collect this debt by garnishing (commonly called “attaching”) their wages. There are federal limits on how much can be garnished from your wages. States and tribal governments may have established laws further limiting garnishment. Tribal payments may be eligible for garnishment if you owe money and have been sued by a creditor. For more information on garnishment, see Module 3 in *Your Money, Your Goals*.

Using the tools

Within the toolkit’s *Module 3: Tracking and managing income and benefits*, you will find three tools:

- **Tool 1: Income and resource tracker**—to help people account for their income and benefits and understand the timing of these financial resources. You may want to add a column for per capita payments if this is a source of income people in your community receive. This information can be used to help create a cash flow budget.
- **Tool 2: Ways to receive income and benefits: Know your options**—to help people determine the best way to get their income and benefits—cash, check, direct deposit, payroll or debit card, or electronic benefits transfer (EBT)—in cases where individuals have options.
- **Tool 3: Ways to increase income and resources**—to provide people with ideas for increasing their financial resources on a one-time or ongoing basis. You may want to add ideas to this tool that are specific to your community.
- **Native Communities Tool: Making the most of the IIM** can help young adults and others who are receiving IIM or other large payments consider how they can build a plan to spend or save that reflects their values and helps achieve their goals.

Making the most of the IIM

What to do:

Getting a lump sum of money is exciting. People receiving their IIM or 18-money may not consider ways to maximize the value of this money through planning.

Use this tool with anyone that is going to receive their IIM or 18-money. Provide them the opportunity to think through the pros and cons of spending and saving this money and how their use of this lump sum relates to their values and goals.

You can give the tool to someone to complete or you can use the questions and sections within the tool as the basis for a dialogue with someone.

What to say:

“Do you know if you are receiving an IIM or 18-money? Have you thought about how you are going to use that money? With a little planning, you can have fun and maybe use some of that money to help you reach your goals, too.”

To access a dynamic and fillable version of this tool, visit: www.consumerfinance.gov/practitioner-resources/your-money-your-goals/companion-guides.



Making the most of the IIM

If you are expecting your IIM or 18-money, use this worksheet to plan to make the most of it. Answer the questions in the tool to help you decide how best to use the money to help you achieve your goals.

How much do you think you are getting from your IIM or 18-money account?

When will you get it?

How will you get your IIM or 18-money? (Check one.)

One-time or windfall payment?

Regular recurring payments?

Spending your IIM

List below the pros and cons you see of spending all the money you receive. Consider these questions when making your list.

- What if you spent all of the IIM money you are about to receive right away?
- What would you buy with it?
- How would that affect your future?
- How would that affect members of your family?

PROS	CONS

Saving your IIM

List below the pros and cons you see of saving some or all the money you receive. Consider these questions when making your list.

- What if you saved some or all of the IIM money you are about to receive?
- How would that affect your future?
- How would that affect members of your family?

PROS	CONS

Evaluating your choice

Review your pro and con lists. How do you plan to use your IIM?

List three of your goals

Don't forget to make your goals SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ble to be achieved, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound.) *Your Money, Your Goals* has tools that can help you do this.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Things to think about or discuss with someone

- Does your planned use of your IIM help you achieve your goals?
- Does your planned use of your IIM help make a better future for yourself? Your family? Your community?
- Will your planned use of your IIM bring you short-term happiness or long-term happiness?
- Will your planned use of your IIM help you earn money in the future?
- Will your family, friends, and community elders respect your choice?

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Module 4: Paying bills and other expenses

How you use your money is often a reflection of values. But, there are individual consequences for not paying your bills on time or repaying your debts. This happens regardless of the contributions you have made to your family or community.

Overview

Module 4: Paying bills and other expenses in *Your Money, Your Goals* has tools that include charts and tables that help people track their income and expenses to see where and when they spend. It also provides suggestions to help people figure out how to prioritize their bills in months that they find they can't pay them all on time.

Focus for Native Communities

How people use their money is often a reflection of their individual, family, and cultural values. For example, you may prioritize using some of your resources to provide family members with assistance or invest in helping your community.

When it comes to your personal financial resources, the U.S. financial system will reward or penalize you based on whether you pay your bills on time and repay debt according to the agreement, regardless of the contributions you have made to your family or community. For example, your history of using credit is captured and reflected in your credit reports and credit scores. And having a poor credit history and scores could result in your paying more for loans and credit cards and, for example, paying higher utility and cell phone plan deposits. This could leave you with less money to spend on things you value more highly.

Making decisions about how to use your financial resources is ultimately about balance—balancing your individual and family needs for shelter, food, and clothing with your personal or cultural values that may emphasize sharing with others.

Using the tools

Within *Module 4: Paying bills and other expenses in Your Money, Your Goals*, there are five tools:

- **Tool 1: Spending tracker.** Help people understand when and how much they spend on living expenses and bills. This information can be used to help create a cash flow budget. It can also be used to help people plan for saving or sharing more of their resources.
- **Tool 2: Bill calendar.** Help people make a visual reminder of when their regular bills are due.
- **Tool 3: Ways to pay bills: Know your options.** Help people choose from among cash, money orders, checks, credit cards, prepaid cards, automatic debit from checking or savings, and online bill payment.
- **Tool 4: Strategies for cutting expenses.** Provide a wide range of strategies for cutting expenses. You may want to add culturally- or community-appropriate ideas to this tool.
- **Tool 5: When cash is short—prioritizing bills and planning spending.** Provide people with a plan to make it through the month when there is not enough cash or other financial resources to cover all of their bills and living expenses. The tool helps people prioritize spending based on protecting their income, shelter, assets (including health), and paying obligations such as child support, income taxes, and student loans.

Module 5: Getting through the month

Native Communities have planned for the use and conservation of natural resources for thousands of years. Cash flow budgeting applies those principles to financial resources and income.

Overview

Module 5: Getting through the month in *Your Money, Your Goals* brings together the income and spending trackers from Modules 3 and 4 to help create a cash flow budget. The cash flow budget tools let individuals see how much money comes in and where it goes out in spending. The tools also demonstrate how people can make changes in the timing of spending to ensure financial resources and spending are balanced.

Focus for Native Communities

Planning the use and conservation of resources is something Native Communities have practiced for thousands of years. For example, some communities may have hunted in the late winter and early spring. They stopped hunting during the spring birthing season and switched to preparations for planting crops. Such careful planning and follow through enabled herds to repopulate, so that they would be a sustainable resource in the future. It also ensured there were crops to harvest in the late summer and early fall.

Cash flow budgeting is an extension of this concept of planning. Instead of natural resources, however, it is planning with financial resources and income.

Module 5 provides information and tools to help people make plans to get through the month—pay for all of their living expenses, bills, financial obligations, and other uses of income or financial resources, including saving and sharing with family and the community.

The toolkit uses a cash flow budget approach that looks at the timing of income and expenses from week to week. People sometimes experience shortfalls because of when income or financial resources are received and when their bills are due. These week-by-week shortfalls can be missed in a monthly static budget.

Using the tools

In *Your Money, Your Goals*, there are three tools in *Module 5: Getting through the month*:

- **Tool 1: Cash flow budget.** Help people create their own cash flow.
- **Tool 2: Cash flow calendar.** Provide an alternative format for creating a cash flow.
- **Tool 3: Improving cash flow checklist.** Provide people with strategies to better balance their sources and uses of cash and financial resources. You may want to add culturally- or community-appropriate ideas to this tool.
- **Native Communities Tool: Annual planning tool** is provided as a supplement to these tools to help people plan if their sources and uses of income and other financial resources are annual, twice a year, or sporadic.

Annual planning tool

What to do:

Using the cash flow budget can be difficult for people who have sporadic or seasonal income and periodic expenses. The annual planning tool can be used to help someone think through when their income may come in and when they may have irregular expenses.

Start by asking individuals the questions about income and uses of income listed in the first part of the tool.

Once these questions are answered, the information can be used to complete the annual planning calendar. Encourage individuals to put this calendar in a place they can see it. This visual reminder may help them remember when sporadic expenses are coming due and when they can anticipate additional income.

What to say:

“Both sources and uses of financial resources can be unpredictable for some people. You may have months where expenses are higher due to religious observances, cultural celebrations, vacations, taxes or fees that you owe, or back to school expenses. You may have months where you have more income from seasonal work or other months with windfall income such as a per capita payment. You may also have months in which you have no income.

Using a cash flow budget can be empowering. It can help you plan how to use your resources to support your family and your community. It can be hard to use a weekly or monthly budgeting tool when you have periodic or sporadic income and expenses. The annual planning tool can help.”

To access a dynamic and fillable version of this tool, visit: www.consumerfinance.gov/practitioner-resources/your-money-your-goals/companion-guides.



Annual planning tool

Use this chart to anticipate and estimate some one-time per year sources and uses of income and benefits.

Sources of income	Amount expected	Date and how often it's received
Do you get per capita or other tribal payments?		
Do you generally receive a large tax refund, including the Earned Income Tax Credit or other tax credits?		
Do you get any tribal or public benefits that are received one-time or a few times per year?		
Do you earn income from seasonal work?		
Do you earn income sporadically by working on contract or through some other kind of work?		
Are there any other sources of income or benefits that you receive one-time or a few times per year?		
Other:		

Sources of spending	Typical cost	Anticipated date
Do you have children attending school and expenses related to school like back-to-school shopping after summer break?		
Do you generally attend reunions, powwows, or other gatherings?		
Do you anticipate making any investments in regalia or other items needed for reunions, powwows, traditional celebrations, or gatherings including giveaways?		
Do you regularly provide support for family or community members?		
Do you generally celebrate or observe any religious or cultural holidays?		
Do you owe and make quarterly self-employment or other income tax payments?		
Do you pay for insurance on a quarterly, semi-annual, or annual basis?		
Do you pay property, vehicle, or other taxes on a quarterly, semi-annual, or annual basis?		
Do you travel to see family (besides reunions, powwows, or gathering) or go on vacations?		
Do you anticipate making any major purchases like gardening supplies, home repairs, or appliances?		
Other:		

Use your answers from the sources of income and spending charts to summarize your projections for each month. You will be able to use this each month as you create a cash flow budget to ensure you don't miss sources and uses of income and financial resources that are not regular.

Month	Estimated sources of income	Estimated spending
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		
July		
August		
September		
October		
November		
December		

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Module 6: Dealing with debt

Debt obligates future resources to cover decisions made today. Understanding how to manage, reduce, and get rid of debt are important parts of financial empowerment.

Overview

Your Money, Your Goals provides information about various types of debt and how to manage it, avoid being trapped by it, and your rights if a debt is in collection. Debt and credit are not the same. Credit may allow you to purchase something you need but do not have the cash to pay for such as a vehicle or home. When you borrow money on credit, you get a loan. Debt may result from using credit. Someone can have a line of credit without having debt. For example, an individual may have a credit card but no outstanding balance on it.

Focus for Native Communities

For Native Communities that embrace a perspective based on living in harmony with the world and people around you having or even discussing debt may create a conflict. This is because debt is about borrowing from the future and may upset that harmony. Debt obligates future resources to cover decisions made today.

Debt, however, is a current reality in many communities—communities may have debt due to money raised for improvements that benefit everyone, businesses may have debt to enable them to expand. Families and individuals may have debt related to buying or repairing a home, buying a car or truck, starting a business, getting their children education and training after high school, or emergency expenses.

Understanding debt, how to manage it, and how to reduce and get rid of it, are important components of financial empowerment.

Using the tools

Within *Module 6: Dealing with debt*, there are five tools:

- **Tool 1: Debt worksheet.** Help people make a list of the debts they currently have. If someone wants to reduce or get rid of debt, it's essential to have a realistic picture of the debt they owe.
- **Tool 2: Debt-to-income worksheet.** Help people understand how much of their income goes to covering their debt. This is also a calculation lenders may use to help determine if someone can financially handle more debt.

- **Tool 3: Reducing debt worksheet.** Provide people with strategies to reduce their debt if this is a goal they have.
- **Tool 4: Repaying student loans.** Provide people with information about repayment options for student loans.
- **Tool 5: When debt collectors call: Steps you can take.** Provide people with information about their rights when a debt collector calls.

Module 7: Understanding credit reports and scores

Your Money, Your Goals toolkit, includes information to help you understand what credit reports and scores are, what goes into them, and why they're important.

Overview

A **credit report** is generally a record of some of a consumer's bill-paying history, public record information (such as a filing for bankruptcy), and prior inquiries by a creditor into the consumer's credit history at the time a consumer applies for credit.

Credit scores are calculated using the information in credit reports. A credit score is typically a number. A higher score makes it easier to qualify for a loan or lower interest rates. Many scores range from 300-850, but different companies use different ranges of scores.

Problems on an individual's credit report can affect the ability to rent an apartment and secure employment and the interest rate for obtaining credit. So, individuals should review their credit reports to make sure they are accurate.

Focus for Native Communities

Financial issues can be tough to talk about in Native Communities because so many concepts that relate to them may, on their surface, seem individualistic. This can conflict with values of sharing resources with family, clan, and community. In no situation is this clearer than when discussing credit reports and scores.

In cultures that strongly value sharing and family and community needs, a key to understanding credit reports and scores is that a person's financial actions ultimately have individual consequences. For example, not paying an auto loan so you can help a family member with a financial need may result in having your car repossessed. And this could have other consequences including not being able to get to your job, which lessens your ability to help family members in the future. Finally, not paying your auto loan payment could mean a negative entry on your credit report and a significant drop in your credit scores. This may create other challenges like not being able to secure a better paying job or buy a home or other asset.

Module 7 provides information and tools to help people get, review, and improve their credit report and scores.

Using the tools

Within *Module 7: Understanding credit reports and scores*, there are four tools:

- **Tool 1: Getting your credit reports and scores.** Help people get their credit reports and scores.
- **Tool 2: Credit report review checklist.** Help people read and review their credit reports and file disputes for inaccurate or incomplete information identified on reports.
- **Tool 3: Improving your credit reports and scores.** Provide people with steps to improve both credit reports and scores.
- **Tool 4: Keeping records to show you've paid your bills.** Provide people with a simple system to keep records so they have evidence for disputes on credit reports.

Module 8: Money services, cards, accounts, and loans: Finding what works for you

Choosing the right financial products and services for you can help you protect and better manage your money and financial resources to achieve your goals.

Overview

There are many ways and places to keep money. Some are more secure, less costly, or more convenient than others. **Module 8: Money services, cards, accounts, and loans: Finding what works for you** helps people understand how to find and choose financial services, products, and providers.

Focus for Native Communities

Historically, many Native Communities lacked access to financial products, services, and providers. While access is not yet universal, access to appropriate and safe financial products and services has improved because of:

- Native Community Development Financial Institutions (Native CDFIs) including credit unions and community banks.
- Increased awareness among banks and credit unions to better serve Native Communities.
- The emergence of online bank and credit union products and services.

Many types of financial products and services can help people protect their money and financial resources, better manage their money, more efficiently pay for their current living expenses, and set aside money for their goals or for future generations.

Protecting what you have as a community ensures it will be there not only today, but also tomorrow and in future generations.

Your Money, Your Goals takes a financial empowerment approach to financial products and services. Rather than directing people to a particular type of provider or service, this module starts with an assessment of your needs or priorities and—based on those needs—helps you choose from among your options. With this information, you can make the choices that are best for you and your family.

Using the tools

Within *Module 8: Money services, cards, accounts, and loans: Finding what works for you*, you will find five tools:

- **Tool 1: Know your options: Money services, cards, accounts, and loans.** Help people assess their need for financial products and services and then match those needs with products, services, and providers.
- **Tool 2: Ask questions: Choosing where to get what you need.** Help people compare different financial service providers.
- **Tool 3: Money services and banking basics.** Provide people with a list financial products and services available at credit unions, community banks, and banks.
- **Tool 4: Opening an account checklist.** Provide people with the general steps to take and information needed to open an account at most credit unions, community banks, and banks.
- **Tool 5: Money transfers and remittances: What you need to know.** Provide people with an overview of some of the protections for people who send and receive money transfers and remittances.

Module 9: Protecting your money

Protecting what you have as a community ensures it will be there today and for future generations. When it comes to protecting your money, there are laws that give you rights.

Overview

Module 9: Protecting your money focuses on how to protect your information and money. It explains some of the most important consumer protection laws. The module covers how to submit a complaint with the CFPB if a person has problems with any financial service or product.

Focus for Native Communities

One important job of tribal leaders is to protect the assets that belong to the tribe. These assets could be land or the natural resources that come from the land. These assets could be tribal enterprises built by community members, from banks to grocery stores to consulting firms to casinos. They could be money that comes from settlements with the U.S. government or corporations. They could also be community traditions including ceremonies, traditional ways of life, and language.

Protecting what you have as a community ensures it will be there not only for today, but also for tomorrow and future generations.

When it comes to protecting your money and financial resources, there are laws that give you rights. *Module 9: Protecting your money* provides an introduction to some of these laws as well as an overview of how to protect your identity and how to determine that a financial product or service may not be a good deal for you.

Importantly, this module also covers how to submit a complaint to the CFPB. If someone feels uncomfortable submitting a complaint, another individual can submit a complaint on her behalf, with her consent.

When someone submits a complaint, the CFPB forwards it to the company and work to get a response. After the CFPB forwards a complaint, the company has 15 days to respond to you and the CFPB. Companies are expected to close all but the most complicated complaints within 60 days. You'll be able to review the response and give feedback to the CFPB. If it finds that another agency would be better able to assist, CFPB will forward your complaint and let you know.

The CFPB also shares complaint data with state and federal agencies that oversee financial products and services, and we publish a database of non-personal

complaint information so the public knows what kinds of complaints we receive and how companies respond. These complaints also help identify areas of attention for our supervisory/enforcement actions.

Using the tools

Within *Module 9: Protecting your money*, you will find four tools:

- **Tool 1: Submitting a complaint to the CFPB.** Help people understand the process for submitting a complaint on a financial product, service, or provider online or over the phone.
- **Tool 2: Protecting your identity.** Help people understand steps they can take to prevent identity theft as well as steps to take if they suspect their identities have been stolen.
- **Tool 3: Red flags.** Provide people with a list of potential warning signs that a financial product or service may not be in their best interests.
- **Tool 4: Learning more about consumer protection.** Provide people with an overview of some of the key laws designed to protect them in the financial products and services marketplace.

Financial empowerment and elders

The traditional value of respect for elders is not a guarantee against elder financial exploitation.¹⁴ But that value can be used to encourage community members to learn about all types of elder abuse and empower everyone to take action to prevent and report these crimes.

The following section is new to *Your Money, Your Goals* and was created specifically for Native Communities. It covers financial empowerment and elders and discusses how to protect elders from financial abuse and exploitation. The tools in the section will help you identify elder financial abuse and exploitation, get help if you suspect it is occurring, and prevent these crimes from happening to elders in your community.

As people go through life, their financial needs and goals change. So do the potential risks they may face. Elders can be especially vulnerable because they may have income, assets, or other resources accumulated from working throughout their lives.

Elder financial exploitation is the illegal or improper use of an older person's funds, property or assets. This can occur through fraud or scams, or when caregivers, family members, or others improperly use an elder's financial resources.

¹⁴ National Indian Council on Aging. Preventing and Responding to Abuse in Indian Country, June 2004. See www.ncea.aoa.gov/Resources/Publication/docs/abuseindian040707.pdf.

The following circumstances or conditions can make an elder a target of financial exploitation:¹⁵

- Having regular income and accumulated assets.
- Being trusting and polite.
- Having cognitive impairments that affect financial decision-making and judgment.
- Being dependent on a family member, caregiver, or another person who may pressure the elder.
- Being lonely and socially isolated.
- Being vulnerable due to grief from the loss of a spouse, family member, friend, or pet.
- Being reluctant to report exploitation by a family member, caregiver, or someone they depend on.
- Being dependent on support from a family member or caregiver to remain independent.
- Receiving care from a person with substance abuse, gambling or financial problems, or mental health issues.
- Fearing retaliation by the exploiter.
- Being unfamiliar with managing financial matters.
- Being unprepared for retirement and the potential loss of financial decision-making capacity.

While cons and scams perpetrated by strangers are commonly highlighted as risks for elders, too often family members and people that provide services or care to elders commit these offenses.

Remember, the traditional value of respect for elders is not a guarantee against elder financial exploitation. But that value can be used to encourage community members to learn about all types of elder abuse and empower everyone to take action to report these crimes.

- Use **Native Communities Tool: Identifying elder financial exploitation**, to help you identify financial exploitation.

15 The following list is from Money Smart for Older Adults. See http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201306_cfpb_msoa-participant-guide.pdf

- **Native Communities Tool: Getting help for victims of elder financial exploitation** can help you take action if you suspect exploitation may have occurred to an elder in your community.
- Use **Native Communities Tool: Preventing elder financial exploitation** to help you help elders in your community prevent financial exploitation from taking place.

Identifying elder financial exploitation

What to do:

Identifying elder financial exploitation may be difficult. Elders may be reluctant to say anything about what is happening to them out of embarrassment and shame, fear of reprisal, dependency on the perpetrator of the offense, or fear of further straining a family relationship. Family members or close friends may be unaware of the situation with the elder. Or they may be the individuals financially exploiting the elders.

Use this checklist to educate community members about elder financial exploitation. It can be used one-on-one if someone expresses concern about an elder and his or her living conditions, care, or financial situation. Responses to the questions included in the checklist can help you or the individual you are working with get assistance.

What to say:

“Elders are one of our greatest community resources. With their years of experience, they are our source of wisdom. In spite of this, with age may come dependency on others. This may be dependency for taking care of their home, their own personal physical care, or financial decisions.

It’s unpleasant to think about someone taking advantage of an elder, but it happens all too often. Since you have expressed concern about an elder, we can use this checklist to see if financial exploitation may be happening.

Remember, elders may be reluctant to say anything about what is happening to them out of embarrassment and shame, for fear of reprisal, dependency on the perpetrator of the offense, or fear of further straining a family relationship. Elder financial exploitation is both a violation of relationships and a violation of the law.”

To access a dynamic and fillable version of this tool, visit: www.consumerfinance.gov/practitioner-resources/your-money-your-goals/companion-guides.



Identifying elder financial exploitation

The following checklist contains some of the signs that financial exploitation may be occurring. Use this information to help you decide whether to get assistance.

Check the box if suspected, observed, or reported.

Situation	Suspected	Observed	Reported
The elder's living conditions are below expectations in light of her financial resources.			
Family members are living with the elder, but not assuming financial or maintenance/upkeep responsibilities of the home and/or property.			
A live-in caregiver refuses to leave or to leave the elder alone with visitors.			
Caregivers or family members caring for the elder seem to isolate him from other family members, friends, and community events or gatherings.			
A caregiver refuses to spend the elder's money on necessities for basic care, including expenditures for personal grooming, household upkeep, and appropriate medical care.			
A caregiver receives an unusual level of expensive or frequent gifts paid for with financial resources of the elder.			
The elder transfers title of home or other assets to someone else for no apparent reason.			
The elder's personal belongings, important papers, credit cards, or identification documents go missing.			

Situation	Suspected	Observed	Reported
Changes are made to the elder's will that are unexplainable or made when the elder is ill or otherwise incapacitated.			
Frequent checks are made out to "cash" from the elder's account.			
The caregiver's name is added to the accounts of the elder or the caregiver becomes an authorized user on credit card accounts belonging to the elder.			
Unusual bank or credit card activity is reported.			
Bills go unpaid or overdue when someone else has been charged with paying them for the elder.			
The elder does not know how much income she receives. The caregiver is unwilling to share that information when asked by other family members.			
The elder seems suddenly more fearful and becomes reluctant to talk about topics that were once routine conversations.			
Signatures on checks, legal documents, or other communications do not match the elder's signature.			
The elder takes out a large, unexplained loan or reverse mortgage.			
Unusual information in a tax return is spotted.			

This tool is included in the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Your Money, Your Goals in Native Communities: A supplemental guide. The CFPB has prepared this material as a resource for the public. This material is provided for educational and information purposes only. It is not a replacement for the guidance or advice of an accountant, certified financial advisor, or otherwise qualified professional. The CFPB is not responsible for the advice or actions of the individuals or entities from which you received the CFPB educational materials. The CFPB's educational efforts are limited to the materials that the CFPB has prepared.

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Getting help for elder financial exploitation

What to do:

If you suspect that an elder in your community is the victim of financial exploitation either based on your direct experiences with them, information from another community member, or the answers to Native Communities Tool 5: Identifying elder financial exploitation, use Tool 6 to get help.

What to say:

“You think that financial exploitation may be happening. Suspecting elder financial exploitation is enough of a reason to get help. Use this checklist to find specific resources to help protect the elder and the elder’s finances.”

To access a dynamic and fillable version of this tool, visit: www.consumerfinance.gov/practitioner-resources/your-money-your-goals/companion-guides.



Getting help for elder financial exploitation

Elder financial exploitation often goes unreported. Many people do not know which steps to take. Remember, you do not need to prove that abuse is occurring to report it. It is up to the professionals to take action if you suspect abuse.

Below is a list of resources that may help if you suspect that an elder has been the victim of financial abuse or exploitation.

AGING SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Find out if your community has a Tribal Elder Protection Team or similar entity in place. This may be the first place to report suspected financial abuse or exploitation. You may also want to contact your tribal social services office. Ask for adult protective services.
- If you are unsure of the tribal entity that manages eldercare in your community, call the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116. Trained information specialists are available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET. You can also search for a local adult protective services agency at www.eldercare.gov.
- Contacting your local Area Agency on Aging. To locate your local agency, call the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116 or search at www.eldercare.gov.
- If you live outside an area covered by a tribal government, contact your community's Adult Protective Services and/or local police.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- You may want to contact your tribal police force. To locate your tribal police, contact the special agent in charge in your district: www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/BIA/OJS/ojs-contact/index.htm.
- You can also report financial fraud to your tribal government and/or your state's attorney general office. Use this locator to find the office in your state: www.naag.org/naag/attorneys-general/whos-my-ag.php.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

- You may feel you need legal assistance to help you, for example, with getting back money or property that was taken or to protect the elder from additional exploitation. If you need legal advice or representation, contact a federally-funded legal assistance program for people 60 and older, known as Title IIIB legal services programs. Title IIIB legal services programs can provide legal assistance on issues such as income security, health care, long-term care, nutrition, housing, utilities, protective services, defense of guardianship, abuse, neglect, and age discrimination, as well as financial exploitation.
- Legal assistance in these programs is targeted towards older individuals in social and economic need. Each program has its own priorities and eligibility guidelines regarding case acceptance and areas of representation.

- Legal assistance for seniors may be located within your local legal services program. You can find out about your local legal assistance programs by using:
 - Legal Services Corporation legal aid locator at www.lsc.gov/what-legal-aid/find-legal-aid
 - Pine Tree Legal Assistance’s list of legal services links—including Indian legal services—by state at <http://ptla.org/legal-services-links>.
 - National Indian Legal Services at www.judicare.org/content.cfm?PageID=52.

IDENTITY THEFT

- If you suspect that identity theft has occurred, you can report this to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at www.ftc.gov/idtheft or by calling 1-877-IDTHEFT (438-4338).
- The FTC has an online toolkit that includes a detailed guide for protecting your information, with instructions and sample letters to help spot and respond to identity theft: *Taking Charge: What to Do If Your Identity Is Stolen*. You can find it here: www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/pdf-0009-taking-charge.pdf.

CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

- If you’re having a problem with a bank account, credit card, student loan, consumer loan or other financial products or services you can submit a complaint with the CFPB at cfpb.gov/complaint.
- You can report scams, rip offs and unwanted telemarketing through the FTC website: www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov.

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Preventing elder financial exploitation

What to do:

While it's important to identify elder financial exploitation and get help when it occurs, it's equally important to take steps to prevent it from happening in the first place.

Preventing elder financial exploitation takes a coordinated community response that includes engaging elders, the people who provide direct services to elders, community leaders, and law enforcement responders.

Use this tool and to start engaging community members in protecting elders. The tool contains both strategies for communities to use and actions for elders and their trusted family members to take. Taking action at both levels will contribute to a safer community for elders.

What to say:

"You seem to be concerned about elder financial exploitation. The best defense is working together to prevent elder financial exploitation from happening in the first place. This will take an ongoing effort at the community level as well as with elders and their caregivers. We can use Tool 7 to come up with some specific ways to engage others in making sure people do not cheat our elders out of their hard-earned resources."

To access a dynamic and fillable version of this tool, visit: www.consumerfinance.gov/practitioner-resources/your-money-your-goals/companion-guides.



Preventing elder financial exploitation

Preventing elder financial exploitation takes a coordinated community response that includes engaging elders, direct service providers, community leaders, and law enforcement responders.

Actions for elders and their trusted family members

There are many steps elders can take to protect themselves if they act early. The list below includes recommended actions for individual elders, family caregivers and community members who can look out for or care for them. Not every step will apply to every elder or community, but this checklist will get you started in protecting elders from financial abuse and exploitation.

Check when completed

- Encourage advance planning for diminished capacity.** Provide elders with resources to help them determine how they want to manage their money and property in the event they become unable to do so for themselves. Advance planning may include making a power of attorney or trust.

- Help people understand powers of attorney and tailor them to the elder's needs.** A power of attorney is a legal document authorizing someone to make decisions about money and property on someone else's behalf. If abused, this power can be used to steal a person's financial assets. Communities and legal professionals can help elders understand that they need be sure to name someone they trust as their agent. It is important to communicate that powers of attorney can include built-in protections. Legal professionals can help people tailor the document to individual needs. For example, in the document, the elder can require the agent to provide an annual accounting of income and expenses to an outside party, such as an attorney or other trusted third party.

- Use automatic bill paying.** Routine bills can be set up on automatic bill pay from the elder's checking or savings account. Alternatives include paying by check or credit card. All of these methods have the advantage of creating a "paper trail," unlike cash. That way, if there is a problem later, the elder or family or community member who is helping them can see where the money went.

- Involve several people.** Major financial decisions for elders should be made only after consulting several trusted people, such as relatives, attorneys and financial professionals.

-
- Have checks directly deposited.** This reduces the opportunity for theft. However, the funds are still at risk if the abuser is a joint owner on the account.
-
- Communicate with the bank or credit union and review statements.** Banks and credit unions are often the first to see questionable financial activity and can alert the elder or a relative. Be sure to review statements from banks, credit unions, credit card providers, and other financial service providers monthly.
-
- Check your credit reports regularly.** This is one of the primary ways people discover their identity has been stolen and accounts have been fraudulently set up in their names.
-
- Check references.** Anyone hired to provide care—including relatives who are being paid—should be thoroughly screened.
-
- Reduce isolation.** It's tougher for a caregiver to commit fraud in a crowd, so the elder should keep in touch with friends and family members. If you live far away from a vulnerable relative, keep in contact with the relative's close friends, and neighbors.
-
- Protect all documents related to identity and financial information.** Keep all identification documents, important financial papers, and other information in a safe and secure place. When disposing of anything that has personal or financial information on it, shred it to prevent someone from stealing sensitive information from the trash.
-
- Remember that if it's too good to be true, it probably is.** Be aware of the red flags of cons, scams, and other kinds of fraud, such as:
 - A stranger asks for a Social Security number, tribal identification card information, bank account numbers, date of birth, or other sensitive private information on the phone or in an email.
 - Someone leads elders to believe that other elders or leaders are investing in the opportunity being presented.
 - Someone "guarantees" wealth from an investment.
 - Someone creates a sense of urgency by stating that there is a limited time to act or a limited number of opportunities.
 - Someone is offering a product or service but requires a large upfront payment.
 - Someone claims the elder has won a lottery, prize, sweepstakes, or a trip, but requires payment of a fee or taxes to claim the prize.

Strategies for building safer communities

Some of these actions may take weeks, months, or longer to fully implement and will likely require many follow-up steps. You may want to consider organizing a group or task force to develop and implement a plan for your community.

Goal	First steps	Follow-up actions
Identify existing resources in your community.	Talk to tribal government and social services to find out what resources are available to help elders who are victims of financial exploitation.	Work to identify key players or interested partners in and outside of tribal government who share your concerns and desire for community change. Ask if they will help set up a Tribal Elder Protection Team to work to develop a coordinated community response.
Work with your tribal police force.	Meet with your tribal police force. Sometimes, police officers do not understand the importance of documenting identity theft and other individual financial crimes. Consider meeting with the leadership of your tribal police force to discuss community concerns about elder financial exploitation (including identity theft).	Once you've built a relationship with partners in the tribal police force, invite them to join you in your efforts. Here are some ideas you can discuss with your law enforcement partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training for responders ▪ Agency collaboration in the development of a Tribal Elder Protection Team ▪ Creating a protocol for response to crimes against elders.
Raise awareness of elder financial exploitation.	Encourage all community members to take care of elders by watching out for financial exploitation including fraud, scams, and other crimes that target elders.	Use community and cultural events to educate community members about the risks to elders and the signs that financial abuse or exploitation may have occurred. Order copies of <i>MoneySmart for Older Adults, Managing someone else's money</i> , and other free publications at http://promotions.usa.gov/cfpbpubs.html .

Goal	First steps	Follow-up actions
<p>Find culturally appropriate materials about wills, trusts, and powers of attorney to protect elders' assets.</p>	<p>Find educational materials that can be used to teach people about wills, trusts, and powers of attorney to protect elders' assets including their land. These materials should explain the benefits of planning ahead for the loss of capacity to manage finances and for the disposition of property after death. The CFPB website is a good place to start looking: www.consumerfinance.gov/managing-someone-elses-money</p>	<p>Consider developing culturally appropriate educational materials, so that they have the greatest possible impact in your community.</p>

For more information on this topic, see *Money Smart for Older Adults*. This fully scripted curriculum includes an Instructor Guide, Resource Guide and a PowerPoint presentation. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and the CFPB jointly developed this information. It is available free-of-charge at: www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/olderadult.html.

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For more information, Service providers can refer to the full “Your Money, Your Goals” toolkit online at cfpb.gov/your-money-your-goals

If you’re having a problem with a bank account, credit card, student loan, consumer loan or other financial products or services you can submit a complaint with the CFPB at cfpb.gov/complaint

For answers to commonly asked questions you might have about other money matters, visit “Ask CFPB” at cfpb.gov/askcfpb

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