

MONTANA



Statistics:

- ▶ **24,625** members received formal and informal financial counseling
- ▶ CUs provided **7,755** hours of counseling
- ▶ **650** members entered into debt management plans and **173** received mortgage workout options
- ▶ **957** students attended one of **92** classroom presentations
- ▶ **1,875** adult members attended a financial education seminar
- ▶ **1,000** students attended a Financial Reality Fair
- ▶ CUs partner with **31** community groups and government agencies



In the Spotlight

- ▶ **Lincoln County CU** received a grant to bring "Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University" to the CU
- ▶ **Park Side FCU** received a grant to offer the "Free to Choose Program" to their members

VITA:

21 credit union-sponsored Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites prepared over 2,400 tax returns and returned over \$2.5 million in federal refunds back to Montana communities in 2011.

Matched Education Savings Accounts (MESA):

The newest matched savings program through MCUCD focuses on helping Montana students pay for tuition. In partnership with credit unions and higher education institutions 147 students will reduce their student debt by nearly \$400,000 by participating in MESA.

Montana's credit unions have long been committed to financial education, embracing the basic philosophy of people helping people. Whether it's one-on-one counseling, classroom presentations, group workshops or referrals to local financial education opportunities, Montana's credit unions are helping members and consumers gain the knowledge and tools to take charge of their finances and create a stronger financial future for themselves and their families.

In 2003, Montana's credit unions decided this was not enough. With their support the Montana Credit Union Network launched a charitable arm to invest in



community development and extend the traditional programs credit unions offer their members. Since then, Montana Credit Unions for Community Development (MCUCD) has taken the lead to partner with credit unions addressing the needs in Montana communities.

In the last eight years MCUCD has built a strong foundation of applicable asset-building and financial education programs which includes free tax services, matched savings accounts, consumer resource centers, and payday loan alternatives. Through train-the-trainer workshops nearly 200 educators, community organization and credit union staff have been trained through MCUCD to date. In addition, MCUCD provides the technical support for credit unions statewide and financial education is a component of all of these programs. This is especially important since 65 percent of Montanans live in rural areas and have difficulty accessing quality resources and services. Currently 75% of the state's credit unions are participating in at least one MCUCD program.

Two programs specifically focused on financial education currently offered through Montana's credit unions include Consumer Resource Centers (CRC) and the Financial Counseling/Coaching program. The CRC, placed in 33 credit unions state-wide, includes a resource center in credit union lobbies, a one-stop web resource, and ongoing outreach through educational newsletter articles, statement inserts, and direct mail pieces to members.

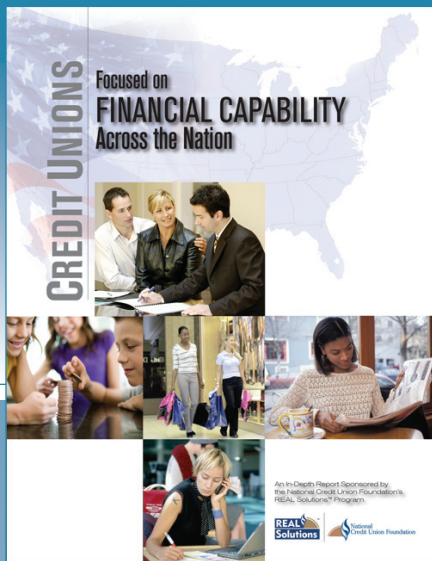
Building upon the foundation laid through the CRC program, MCUCD launched their financial counseling and coaching program in 2011. As a result, the number of certified financial counselors in Montana will jump from 1 to 20 in 2011 after participation in the Credit Union National Associations (CUNA) FiCEP certification program. Plans to continue the FiCEP program will more than double that number in 2012.



Additionally, 25 staff from ten credit unions and partner organizations will be trained as financial coaches this year. Trained staff from MCUCD and partner organizations will continue Financial Coaching Training with regional training across Montana in 2012 resulting in nearly 100 trained financial coaches by year end.

As Montanan consumers continue to feel overwhelmed and stressed by their financial situations, the credit unions in Montana continue to be a primary resource and leader in financial education.





About Credit Unions

- ▶ Credit unions are not-for-profit financial institutions that adhere to cooperative principles.
- ▶ As of December 2010, 92.6 million U.S. consumers were member owners of 7,605 credit unions across the country.
- ▶ Earnings are returned to members in the form of lower loan rates, higher interest on deposits, and lower fees.
- ▶ Credit unions serve members who have a common bond such as employment, association membership, or residence in a particular geographic area.
- ▶ Every credit union is governed by a board of directors, elected by and from the credit union's membership. Board members serve voluntarily.
- ▶ Congress exempts credit unions from federal income taxes but credit unions are subject to payroll, sales and property taxes.
- ▶ Credit unions are democratically owned and controlled institutions with a "people helping people" philosophy. Each credit union member has equal ownership and one vote.
- ▶ Credit unions assist members in becoming better-educated consumers of financial services.
- ▶ Credit unions are a small but significant presence in the financial services industry. Credit unions hold approximately 6.7% of household financial assets.

Source: Credit Union National Association, Inc.

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ACROSS THE NATION

In an effort to capture the depth and breadth of existing financial capability programs, the National Credit Union Foundation (NCUF) and its REAL Solutions™ program conducted a comprehensive national study of credit-union provided member and consumer financial education and counseling. The data derived from this study quantifies the extent to which credit unions are providing opportunities for consumers to advance their financial knowledge and decision-making skills.

The data on which this report is based was collected through an online survey of U.S. credit unions. *Credit Unions: Focused on Financial Capability Across the Nation* features an analysis of information submitted by 576 credit unions of all sizes from 45 states. These credit unions represent 8% of all U.S. credit unions, and 27% of all U.S. credit union memberships as of December 2010.

In 2010, credit unions invested millions of dollars to provide financial education and counseling programs that touched millions of lives:

- ▶ **1.6 million** consumers received financial counseling and/or advice through a credit union.
- ▶ Credit union representatives presented more than **24,000** educational sessions to over **600,000** students in classrooms across the nation.
- ▶ **111,500** student members had **\$34 million** on deposit at **1,400** in-school credit union branches that encourage savings and connect financial education with financial access.
- ▶ **1.2 million** members visited or used a credit union online educational tool, resource and/or course and generated tens of millions of page views.
- ▶ **85,000** teens and young adults participated in **1,200** experiential learning events organized or provided by credit unions. Experiential learning provides participants with a taste of the real financial world in a safe and controlled environment.
- ▶ Between **19 and 24 million** credit union members have access to education and/or counseling that deals with the five individual Financial Literacy and Education Commission (FLEC) core concept categories. Credit union financial education/counseling content is designed to develop proficiencies regarding spending, saving/investing, borrowing, protecting, and earning/income.
- ▶ Credit unions invested **\$140 million** during 2010 toward improving the financial capability of members and consumers in general. Whether it be through grants, human resources or budgeted financial resources, credit unions invest heavily in member and consumer financial education/counseling.

The National Credit Union Foundation believes that access to financial products and services should always be accompanied by educational opportunities. In particular, NCUF encourages behavior change through experiential learning and one-on-one counseling/advice. This link between education and impending opportunities to make financial decisions enables people to take action based on newly gained knowledge, resulting in more financially capable and secure consumers.

Credit Unions: Focused on Financial Capability Across the Nation represents one of several ongoing projects to assist credit unions with educational program development, measurement, and implementation. In the coming years, NCUF and REAL Solutions™ will continue to gather and publish data about credit union provision of financial education/counseling.

To learn more about the **National Credit Union Foundation** and REAL Solutions™, please visit www.ncuf.coop. A copy of the full report, and individual state supplements can be found at the **REAL Solutions™ Impact Center** at www.realsolutions.coop.

