

**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Financial Literacy Means Financial Freedom: Celebrate Financial Literacy Month by Building, Maintaining Healthy Financial Habits**

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) – The Ohio Department of Commerce is joining the Ohio Department of Insurance and other agencies to promote National Financial Literacy Month (April) and offer resources for establishing healthy financial habits. The agencies will hold a free Financial Literacy Information Fair on Monday, April 15 in Columbus.

“When Ohio families maintain healthy financial habits, they build a strong foundation for the future and pass along those good habits to their children,” said Governor Mike DeWine. “Financial Literacy Month is a great time to build or strengthen those habits.”

The Financial Literacy Information Fair on April 15 will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the third-floor mezzanine of the Vern Riffe Center, at 77 South High Street in Columbus, across from the Ohio Statehouse.

Representatives will be on site to talk about programs related to financial literacy, to provide financial information, and to answer questions. Participating organizations include the Ohio Department of Commerce, Ohio Department of Insurance, Ohio Attorney General’s Office, State Treasurer’s Office, Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Housing Finance Agency, Better Business Bureau of Central Ohio, and AARP Ohio.

“The Ohio Department of Commerce provides a variety of resources and information to help Ohioans proactively protect and build their finances,” said Ohio Department of Commerce Director Sheryl Maxfield. “We are committed to helping Ohioans achieve their financial goals and learn more about how to establish healthy financial habits.”

Another important aspect of financial literacy is being prepared to respond to emergencies and the unexpected costs they can bring.

“Preparing for your future and developing a financial plan should always include a review of your insurance needs,” said Ohio Department of Insurance Director Jillian Froment. “By planning for the unexpected, you can help protect yourself, your family, and your long-term financial plans from surprises that life often throws at us. Whether it is storm damage to your home, a car accident, or health care needs, having the insurance coverage you need can help protect your financial goals.”

Additional tips to help develop and maintain healthy financial habits include:

- **Be an informed investor.** A few precautions can keep you from becoming the victim of financial fraud. Before investing, call the Department of Commerce’s Investor Protection Hotline at 877-683-7841 to ask: Is the brokerage firm and salesperson licensed to sell

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securities in Ohio? Have any enforcement actions been taken against them? Has the security been properly registered with the department's Division of Securities? [Learn more about how to be an informed investor.](#)

- **Manage your credit.** Your credit history may affect your mortgage rates, your credit card approvals, or even a job application. It's important to understand how to build and maintain a good credit history, including how to monitor your credit report. The Department of Commerce's Division of Financial Institutions encourages consumers to become informed borrowers, to learn about the different types of credit available, and to monitor their credit reports for unauthorized activity. [Get tips on managing your credit.](#)
- **Keep track of your money.** Each year, the Department of Commerce's Division of Unclaimed Funds receives nearly \$300 million in forgotten money. These funds come from dormant bank accounts, unclaimed security deposits, unredeemed life insurance policies, and forgotten safe deposit boxes. While the division will hold the money in perpetuity, a few steps can help keep it from being turned over in the first place. For example, notify your bank and utility companies if you change addresses. Keep a record of all bank accounts. Record all utility deposits, such as for telephone, cable, or electricity. Cash all checks promptly, no matter how small. Visit your safe deposit box at least once a year. [Search to see if you have unclaimed funds.](#)
- **Understand your insurance needs.** Ensure your insurance coverage is adequate to help you recover from any surprises life throws at you, such as an auto accident or storm damage to your home. [Learn more about different types of insurance coverage.](#)

Financial Literacy Month encourages practices such as developing a budget, understanding credit scores, and adopting best practices for saving, investing, and managing money. Building a strong financial foundation can open opportunities such as buying a car or a home, funding a college education, or paying cash for a dream vacation. It also can protect against losing assets to financial fraud or predatory lending practices.

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