



Consumer Affairs Tabloid



Keeping you in the “KNOW”

287- CITY

Army Community Service Financial Readiness Branch

July 2010

Fort Hood Financial Education Forum

Fort Hood ACS, Financial Readiness will partner with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) Investor Education Foundation’s Military Financial Education to present an interactive Financial Education Forum. During the forum the participants will receive and the tools necessary to raise their level of financial sophistication and make informed financial decisions based on established financial management practices. In addition, participants will have the opportunity to provide feedback on several new interactive presentations on savings, credit, and investments.

The Financial Education Forum for Military will be held on 20 July 2010 from 1330-1630 in the main ballroom of Club Hood, Bldg 5764, corner of Wainwright \$24th Street. For more information please contact Melody Squires at 287-2489 or melody.squires@us.army.mil .

Excerpt from Department of Labor

www.dol.gov/ebsa/pdf/savingsfitness.pdf

Savings Fitness: A Guide to Your Money and Your Financial Future

Getting Fit... Managing Your Financial Life

It starts with a dream, the dream of a secure retirement. Yet like many people you may wonder how you can achieve that dream when so many other financial issues have priority. Besides trying to pay for daily living expenses, you may need to buy a car, pay off debts, save for your children’s education, take a vacation, or buy a home.

How do you manage all these financial challenges and at the same time try to "buy" a secure retirement? How do you turn your dreams into reality? Start by writing down each of your goals on a 3"x 5" card so you can organize them easily. You may want to have family members come up with ideas. Don’t leave something out at this stage because you don’t think you can afford it. This is your “wish list.”

Sort the cards into two stacks: goals you want to accomplish within the next 5 years or less, and goals that will take longer than 5 years. It’s important to separate them because, as you’ll see later, you save for short-term and long-term goals differently. Sort the cards within each stack in order of priority. Make retirement a priority! This needs to be among your goals regardless of your age. Some goals you may be able to borrow for, such as college, but you can’t borrow for retirement.

Write on each card what you need to do to accomplish that goal: When do you want to accomplish it, what will it cost, what money have you set aside already and how much more money will you need to save each month to reach the goal. Look again at the order of priority. How hard are you willing to work and save to achieve a particular goal? Would you work extra hours, for example? How realistic is a goal when compared with other goals? Reorganize their priority if necessary. Put those that are unrealistic back into your wish list. Maybe later you can turn them into reality too.



Excerpt from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/news/cnspr05/cvrstry.html

If at First You Don't Succeed:

Common Mistakes Young Adults Make with Money and How to Avoid Them. Everybody makes mistakes with their money. The important thing is to keep them to a minimum. And one of the best ways to accomplish that is to learn from the mistakes of others. Here is our list of the top mistakes young people (and even many not-so-young people) make with their money, and what you can do to avoid these mistakes in the first place.

Buying items you don't need...and paying extra for them in interest. Every time you have an urge to do a little "impulse buying" and you use your credit card but you don't pay in full by the due date, you could be paying interest on that purchase for months or years to come.

Getting too deeply in debt. Being able to borrow allows us to buy clothes or computers, take a vacation or purchase a home or a car. But taking on too much debt can be a problem, and each year millions of adults of all ages find themselves struggling to pay their loans, credit cards and other bills.

Paying bills late or otherwise tarnishing your reputation.

Companies called credit bureaus prepare credit reports for use by lenders, employers, insurance companies, landlords and others who need to know someone's financial reliability, based largely on each person's track record paying bills and debts.

Not watching your expenses. It's very easy to overspend in some areas and take away from other priorities, including your long-term savings. Our suggestion is to try any system — ranging from a computer-based budget program to hand-written notes — that will help you keep track of your spending each month and enable you to set and stick to limits you consider appropriate.

Not taking responsibility for your finances. Do a little comparison shopping to find accounts that match your needs at the right cost. Be sure to review your bills and bank statements as soon as possible after they arrive or monitor your accounts periodically online or by telephone. You want to make sure there are no errors, unauthorized charges or indications that a thief is using your identity to commit fraud.



From the files of Fort Hood Consumer Affairs Office

Budgeting – aka “A Spending Plan”

What's next? You've thought about your values, needs & wants; developed a set of goals; and now you're ready to come up with an action plan. One that helps you avoid common mistakes yet gives you flexibility to enjoy life.

Have you tracked your expenses for a month? If you don't know where your money is going you will not be able to develop an accurate spending plan.

Now you're ready to get started. A Spending Plan can be simple or complex. You decide which works for you. There are many online programs you can access for free. One source is my.money.gov. Click on the following link for a list of methods and sources available to assist you. <http://205.168.45.52/category/topic1/budgeting-worksheets.html>

Contact the Army Community Service, Financial Readiness Branch at 553-4701 to receive assistance in developing an individualized spending plan.

Previous issues of the Consumer Affairs Tabloid are available on the Financial Readiness section of the ACS website at www.hoodmwr.com/acs. Have questions? Contact: melody.squires@us.army.mil 287-CITY (2489)