



A Guide for Local Ohio Saves Campaigns

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Introduction

Household saving is an extremely important issue for families and individuals in Ohio. In 2004, only 56.1 percent of U.S. households indicated that they had saved in the previous year, which means that over 40 percent of U.S. households did not save in that year (Bucks, Kennickell, & Moore, 2006). The issue of saving in the United States and Ohio is increasingly important, as there is a continuing shift from employers and the government being responsible for retirement saving to more responsibility held by individuals for such saving. In addition, both the proportion of households in the United States holding debt and the average amount of debt continue to increase (Bucks, Kennickell, & Moore, 2006). Consistent saving and planning can help improve the quality of life for individuals and families in the United States and Ohio, and can also help these individuals and families to reach their goals.

The America Saves campaign is a social marketing campaign that increases the awareness of Americans to save and build wealth and reduce debt. Based on the framework of America Saves, many local programs have been developed in Ohio, including Cleveland Saves, Columbus Saves, Hancock County Saves, and Miami Valley Saves. This fact sheet provides a guideline for the process of creating, implementing, and evaluating Ohio-based America Saves programs.

Do It Yourself—Steps to Launching a Local Ohio Saves Campaign

1. **Convince one or more colleague(s) to join you.** The campaign is much more fun and less work if you can

share the activities with colleagues of your neighboring counties.

2. **Contact the state leadership team about your plans.** The Ohio State Extension Specialist, Căzilia Loibl, and Ohio State Extension Program Manager, Cyndi Renn, can help with suggestions, resources, and support. The enrollment slips for local programs in Ohio will be entered into the America Saves database for the program managers. This provides centralized data entry until local campaigns in Ohio are enrolling savers on a regular, ongoing basis. Căzilia Loibl and Cyndi Renn, the state leadership team in Ohio, will need to know when you plan to start enrolling people in order to prepare for data entry.
3. **Assemble an information kit.** Order 50 copies of the free America Saves brochure (specify “America Saves with Cooperative Extension” brochures) and the newest edition of the America Saves newsletter from Michelle Watts (mwatts@consumerfed.org or 202-939-1014) at the national America Saves office. You may want to take the time to enter the county name on the brochures before distributing them.
4. **Meet with the financial institutions in your community.** Ask the financial institutions in your community if they are willing to offer no-fee, low-minimum deposit (e.g. \$5) accounts to your savers. The financial institution has to provide you with a written description (on their letterhead) of the product they are offering to the savers in your campaign. Start with National City Bank, because they are one of the national partners and have the campaign policies already established in all of their branches.

5. **Form a working group.** Invite employers, bankers, credit union associates, government contacts, and non-profits of your community to help plan enrollment sites for your campaign.
6. **Meet with the employers in your community.** Ask businesses if you can hold 30-minute motivational speeches during lunch hour to enroll savers.
7. **Train motivational speakers.** Practice the “art” of convincing people within 20 minutes to join your campaign, using volunteers. The state leadership team in Ohio, Căzilia Loibl and Cyndi Renn, have a video available that shows you how to best conduct these motivational speeches.
8. **Prepare “Welcome Packages” for new savers.** Order America Saves membership cards from Michelle Watts (mwatts@consumerfed.org or 202-939-1014), adding the following:
 - a. Materials with information about your local program
 - b. The list of banking partners
 - c. The 2005 impact report by Jane Schuchardt (http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/economics/fsll/edu_saves.html)
 - d. The one-pager from the Federal Reserve Board Chairman (www.americasaves.org)
9. **Pilot your campaign.** Use at least three months to practice all of the campaign steps:
 - a. How to organize lunch-and-learn enrollment sites at workplaces
 - b. How to give a motivational speech that convinces at least 75 percent of your audience to enroll as a saver
 - c. How to collect the new savers’ enrollment slips in a way that assures the anonymity and confidentiality of the savers’ personal information
 - d. How to hand out Welcome Packages to newly enrolled savers at the end of the workshop
- e. How often to send the enrollment slips to Cyndi Renn on The Ohio State University campus for entry into the national database
- f. How the tellers at your banking partners react to savers showing up with their membership cards in order to open a savings account
- g. How and when to conduct the three-month follow-up calls (let Căzilia and Cyndi help you think this through)
- h. How to ask your banking and business partners for funding to support the campaign
10. **Launch your campaign.** Have a great kick-off event with a lot of media publicity. Announce your plans and specify your goals to the community.
11. **Grow your campaign.** Add enrollment sites, increase the number of motivational speeches at each site, enroll up to 100 percent of your audience, and add financial institutions.
12. **Add special events.** Organize a *Roll Your Change* week during the fall, participate in *America Saves Week* in the spring, or work a booth at one of the State Treasurer’s *Women & Money* conferences.
13. **Count your savers.** Have Cyndi Renn send you a printout of the number of people enrolled and the money they pledged to save. Report this information proudly to your county commissioners.

Reference

Bucks, B.K., Kennickell, A.B., & Moore, K.B. (2006). Recent changes in U.S. family finances: Evidence from the 2001 and 2004 Survey of Consumer Finances. *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, 92, A1-A38.

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