

ORGANIZING AN EXTENSION AMERICA SAVES CAMPAIGN AND/OR SAVES WEEK EVENT

NANCY REGISTER

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What resources are available to extension educators who wanted to 1) participate in America Saves Week, or 2) organize a community/regional/statewide campaign?

There are multiple resources available to extension educators who want to participate in America Saves and America Saves Week. Two guides created by extension educators provide a good blue print for participating in the campaign. The first, written in 2003, describes three levels for organizing a campaign. This campaign model focuses on delivery of a motivational workshop, saver enrollment, outreach to financial institutions, and providing a wealth coach for individual savers. The 2007 guide describes how to get involved in America Saves Week. This guide emphasizes outreach to other organizations, activities, press, and grants.

America Saves provides extensive marketing material that can be downloaded, co-branded, printed, and distributed. Find all materials on www.AmericaSaves.org, and www.AmericaSavesWeek.org. A free quarterly America Saves newsletter is also emailed or regular mailed to enrolled savers; and, the e-wealth coach email is sent monthly to subscribers. America Saves can provide Build Wealth Not Debt brochures. Contact Sara Cooper, scooper@consumerfed.org to order.

America Saves has made small grants to assist extension educators with America Saves Week events. View the guidelines in the "Grants" portion of the Extension guide found on the CSREES website. Proposal deadline for 2010 hasn't been set since the grant that funds this activity has not been finalized. Tentative deadline is December 1. America Saves and Extension will work together to create one reporting document that captures data needed by Extension educators and useful for all organizations/campaigns participating in the Week.

What expectations does America Saves have for extension agents who want to organize community, regional, or statewide campaigns?

A community wide campaign is much more involved than an individual extension office organizing activities for America Saves Week. It's an ongoing coordination effort that recruits organizations from throughout the campaign area to help develop and implement a Saves campaign. Use America Saves Week as a way to

- launch the campaign in 2010,
- recruit/introduce organizations to America Saves: and,
- develop a plan of action throughout the year that focuses on the Week then positions the campaigns as the provider of saving messages/strategies/resources throughout the year.

When asked by organizations what we want them to DO for America Saves Week, our reply is:

1. Promote participation in the Week
2. Provide information about savings
3. Position your organization as a way for its constituents to take financial action

Saver enrollment isn't expressly stated, but that doesn't mean we have de-emphasized it as a goal for America Saves. It simply means that participating in the Week is all about financial action, which could include enrolling as a Saver (and we hope it does!).

Organize your campaign around the following goals and create a strategy to reach each goal.

1. Establish a Saver enrollment goal for the Week or for the year.
2. Establish a number of savings accounts opened or added to for the Week or the year. These accounts can be simple savings accounts, retirement accounts, CDs, etc.
3. Reach out to financial institutions to participate in the Week by offering incentivized savings accounts. Or, work with them to create other motivations for their customers to save
4. Reach out to employers to promote the Week. Create a goal of the number of organizations of all kinds that will participate.
5. Get a media partner that will promote the Week using a variety of strategies: morning news, community segments, saver stories, etc. Establish a goal of households reached through the media.
6. Engage the appropriate public official in the Week, and if possible obtain a public proclamation supporting the goal of savings.
7. If appropriate partner with the local military installations to coordinate Military Saves activities with yours.
8. If appropriate partner with the United Way as you both promote Financial Stability through the Week.

Don't hesitate to contact nregister@consumerfed.org or scooper@consumerfed.org for more information.