

MA Health Care Training Forum Spring 2025 Meeting
Building Financial Futures with the State Treasurer's Office: A Look at BabySteps and
Fin-Ed Programs Transcription

[From Seed to Savings: The Office of Economic Empowerment]

(SUE KANE): Good morning, everyone, and welcome to *Building Financial Futures with the State Treasurer's Office: A Look at BabySteps and Fin-Ed Programs* meeting. Thank you for joining us today. I'm Sue Kane from the Massachusetts Healthcare Training Forum team and I'll be facilitating today's meeting. Our presenters today are Samantha Perry, deputy director of the Office of Economic Empowerment, and Jessica Keegan, BabySteps program manager. Samantha, you're all set?

(SAMANTHA PERRY): I am ready to go. Thank you so much. Thank you so much, Sue and Deb, and for the entire team for having us today. As Sue mentioned, my name is Samantha Perry. I'm the deputy director at the Office of Economic Empowerment. I've been with the team since February 2017. I help to oversee our communications initiatives, our programs, as well as some operations in the office. I'm joined today with my colleague, Jessica Keegan, who oversees the BabySteps program.

You can go on to the next slide. Thank you.

[About OEE]

I'm really glad to be here today. I know that our office has presented at these meetings in the past, but we're really excited to be here again today to talk a little bit more deeply about our financial education initiatives and to either give a refresher or an update on what our office can do for your clients and community.

We are also celebrating our 10-year anniversary this year. Our office was founded in 2015. 10 years later, we are really excited to look back on what we've accomplished and where we're going. You might notice that our branding has changed and some of our programs have changed and expanded, so looking forward to talking a little bit about that today as well. Again, apologies if this is repetitive for anyone who's been to our trainings before, but I wanted to give just a general overview of what our office is about.

We were founded in 2015 by our current state treasurer, Deborah Goldberg. Financial education has always had somewhat of a home in the state treasurer's office in Massachusetts, but Treasurer Goldberg really saw it as a responsibility as the chief financial officer of the state to make sure that there were less barriers to receiving financial education and support, especially coming off the financial crisis that many people faced in the late 2010s and in early 2010s. That's one of the reasons why she founded our office.

She opened the department and assigned a deputy treasurer, Alayna Van Tassel, to the department. Really, we rolled up our sleeves and got right to work on day one. The purpose of our office is to really focus on helping people learn how to manage their money and plan for their family's future. We see ourselves as a resource to other organizations on financial education. We provide workshops on money management and other trainings like that. We also engage with policy proposals that can help establish pathways to increasing financial education and wealth equity for Massachusetts residents.

Many of you are already familiar with many of our programs, but we're going to really do a deep dive into that today. I'm going to turn it over to my colleague. Actually, you can go over to the next slide. I'm sorry.

[OEE'S Programs]

We're going to review all of these programs today, our BabySteps program, Community Ambassadors, Enrich, Valor y Dinero, but I'm going to kick it off with Jessica to talk about our BabySteps initiative. With that, I'll turn it over to Jessica, and you can go over to the next slide.

[Save for your child's future with the MA State Treasury BabySteps]

(JESSICA KEEGAN): Thank you, Samantha. Thank you, Sue. Thank you, everybody, for being here. Again, I understand some of this might be repetitive, but that's perfect because repetition builds memory. I'll be saying a few things a couple of times because that might help you all remember them more. My name is Jessica Keegan. I'm the BabySteps program manager with the Office of Economic Empowerment. I've been with

the office for around three years now. I'll tell you a little bit more about BabySteps, which we do have a new logo, if you've seen this before. BabySteps, while it is for babies, technically, BabySteps is going to kindergarten because it is our fifth year of having BabySteps as a program. We can go to the next slide.

[What is BabySteps?]

Remember what I said about repetition? This is the main bones of BabySteps. BabySteps is offered to anybody in the state of Massachusetts. As long as they are under the age of 1 and open a free college and career savings account, they will receive a free \$50. Again, the most important part, any child in Massachusetts can claim their free \$50 when they open a college and career savings account within one year of their birth or adoption. It really makes sense with BabySteps. However, it can be for any age for those who are adopted. We can go to the next slide.

[Why is this important?]

Why is this important? Of course, you can imagine, kickstarting somebody's college and career savings is important in its own right. Money is an essential part of today's economy, but this is also important because studies have been done specifically with savings for college that really show the importance of a program like BabySteps. Families make sure that they know that their kids are going to something like higher education or college or vocational trainings. Those students will place a greater importance on their own education.

It's been proven that there are higher attendance rates. People show up for class. They show up to take tests and they have better improvements in those grades, including for those tests. One of the favorite stats of mine that is not on this slide is a study that was done with mothers of lower income shows that they had lessened depression symptoms because they knew that their child had a future. This is something that I've experienced in my own work with BabySteps is we've met real parents who say, "Now, I know that my child has this chance. They have this future that we wouldn't have been able to give them before." We can go to the next slide.

[Compound Interest]

Of course, as I said, money is important. You hear this when you're told to save for retirement. If you start putting in money early, it will grow over time. You're lucky that the chat function is off. I will not make you call in response to this like I may normally would. Just think about this in your head. [chuckles]

Julie saves \$50 per month at a 529 account, which is that college and career savings account, when her child is first born. Jonathan saves \$100 per month in a 529 account beginning when his child is in the second grade. I'll give you a moment to think. Who will have more money saved when their child turns 18? Julie, who saves less per month but starts earlier, or Jonathan, who saves almost double per month but starts later?

We can go to the next slide.

[Compound Interest (continued)]

You're probably imagining it's Julie, that even though Julie has put in less money technically per month than Jonathan, she has much more savings. I really think the important part of this is that breakdown. You can see that Julie's contributions are almost matched with how much interest she's earned. Whereas since Jonathan started so much later, his contributions way, way outmatch his interest earned. That's something I want you to keep in mind because, with BabySteps, babies have to open the account, or families open the account for a baby 1 or under. That means they're going to have all of that time before college or career training for the money to grow.

If we go to the next slide, we'll see a real-time example of this with BabySteps.

[BabySteps Seed Growth Over Time]

Looking at this graph, we've had community partners say to us, "You've given us \$50. What does that actually mean when my child's 18? What does that mean when they're going to college? What does that mean when they might start vocational training?" Well, we started out with this graph.

If you contribute \$5 a month after that \$50 BabySteps kickstart, you'll have around \$2,300. With that, your contributions will be around \$1,100 and your interest will be slightly over that. Remember what we were saying from Julie earlier, that even though Julie put in less, you could see that her interest and her contributions were almost matched. You might be thinking, "Okay. Well, that's not too much money. College is super expensive," but BabySteps is exactly that. It's BabySteps to start kickstarting savings. For the future where a family might not have been able to afford things like room and board or books, this is exactly that next step.

You can see in this chart as that goes upward, the impacts of \$10 a month, \$25 a month, \$50 a month, and \$100 a month savings. Since they started so early with BabySteps, it truly is almost equal in interest and in what you're putting in. I always like to say, we had an intern who worked with us. While she was not from Massachusetts, BabySteps didn't exist when she was born. She was from Colorado.

Her father opened a 529, that college and career savings account for her, the month she was born. He put in \$10 every month until she went to college, including some things like birthday money. She went to my alma mater, Suffolk University. Of course, she was able to get some merit scholarships, but she used that 529 to not only pay for her undergraduate, her graduate, and roll over the rest of her funds into a retirement account. That really shows the power of putting \$10 away per month, starting really early, to be able to really kickstart and manipulate a person's future. We can go to the next slide.

[SNAP into BabySteps]

Let me talk to you a little bit about our expansion program, SNAP into BabySteps. One question we always receive is, "Okay, BabySteps, who qualifies?" You've heard me say over and over again. Under 1 in Massachusetts can receive the \$50. There's no income limit to BabySteps. However, we do have an additional expansion program called SNAP into BabySteps, which I'm sure you can assume by the name and the logo, is a partnership with the Department of Transitional Assistance, where anybody can open their BabySteps college and career savings account before they turn 1, get that 529.

As long as they have that 529 before they turn 1 and they're on SNAP benefits, they can receive an extra \$10 a month for one year, so \$120 a year. Plus, that \$50 deposit means \$170 into their savings account, which, as you saw earlier for both my anecdote and the graph, \$10 a month can really be a great start, especially when families might not be able to put that away. Of course, without any partnership, this is not something that's automatic.

We do have data sharing permissions, so families may have heard of us because they have received a text from the Department of Transitional Assistance. If they're on SNAP, they may have received a letter. They may have seen it in one of the SNAP offices. You may have even seen some of our posters, so you might be seeing families who have heard of this. However, they do just need to let us know if they fill out a form stack and telling us what their college and career savings account is. Tell us that they're on SNAP. We'll check that with DTA for them, and then we'll be able to make sure they start receiving that \$10 a month for one year. We just need to find out about it. We can definitely do that on our website, mass.gov/babysteps or mass.gov/snapintobabysteps. It's a really fantastic opportunity for anybody in the state to open the \$50 free seed into the account. Anybody on SNAP can get an additional \$120.

If we'll go to the next slide.

[Benefits Eligibility – NOT AFFECTED]

You can probably think, "Oh, this is free money from the government. This is going to affect my income eligibility for my benefits." Actually, so many benefits are not at all affected by having money in the 529 through BabySteps. You can see I've bolded SNAP here. Of course, SNAP is not affected. That would be really hard on our partnership. Others like WIC, CHIP, Section 8, FSS, so much are no longer affected by having assets in.

You don't need to worry if you're talking to a family who says, "This sounds great. I'd love to start saving for my child's future, but I'm worried that's going to impact my eligibility for some of my benefits." The most common benefits you don't need to worry about. If you go to the next slide, you'll see which benefits are affected.

[Benefits Eligibility – AFFECTED]

These are very, very specific situations. I'm happy to pass the links along later on if they are relevant just because you are probably working with more folks on MassHealth and Medicare than others.

The long and the short of it is most benefits are not affected. If you are somebody who can only save a very specific amount, you will most likely know. For example, if you are over the age of 65 and are receiving long-term care in a very specific situation, you know you are only going to be able to save \$2,000 individually or \$3,000 for family. Same exact thing happens with SSI. As always, your total countable assets must not exceed \$2,000 for individual or \$3,000 for family. That does include BabySteps.

Although if you are interested in learning more, the 529A ABLE account works with folks on SSI to help them save more. Really, MassHealth only for a very specific population, Medicare only affecting a very specific population, Medicare Savings Program for individuals, and SSI.

You're probably thinking, "Oh no, earned income tax credit." That is one of the most important things we talk to our families about as this is a really, really essential tool for folks, especially in poverty. Don't worry too much. Let me give you an example.

You know when you have your checking and your savings account and you see in your savings account, maybe you earn \$0.02 or \$0.03 each month. That is on how much you have in your savings account. The bank gives you \$0.02 or \$0.03. Imagine for those \$0.02 or \$0.03 total to nearly \$12,000. If you are able to make an investment income around \$11,600, you most likely do not even qualify for the earned income tax credit because that is not your contribution. That is the interest that grows on the contribution. We always worry when folks see earned income tax credit is affected. Really, it is total of all investment income, aka, total of all those \$0.02 for the year must not exceed \$11,600.

[Public Program | Affected by 529? | Savings Limit]

We can breeze past the next two slides, those next two slides just show what I just said in a graph so we can go to the next yellow slide.

[How do families enroll?]

Perfect. How do families hear of us? You might be familiar with this part right here about the fact that we are on page 2 of the parent worksheet to receive the birth certificate, which is fantastic and exciting. We know that people are very busy and probably not in a great mindset to sign up for an account when we're talking about the parent worksheet and filling that out.

Really, what is on page 2 of the parent worksheet? They check a box. That just lets us know that they want to receive more information and they'll receive an email in a few weeks through partnership with the Department of Public Health and MEFA, who helps manage those college and career accounts. That email will encourage them to sign up.

You will see on the left there; that's a graphic of the email that families might receive after checking the box on the parent worksheet. That does not open the account, unfortunately. A little more steps than that, but parents can find there. Not all people check that box. Not all people remember checking the box. Not everybody receives that email in Massachusetts. It's really important to talk about this directly with families, especially through partners, to build that trust and let them know that they can sign up for this. They can sign up at mass.gov/babysteps, which will direct them to our partners at fidelity.com/ufund, which does manage the investment sides of the college and career savings account.

Fidelity is fantastic because they have free investment advice, which most people don't understand, and costs a lot of money from other financial advisors. It's fantastic that through BabySteps, you can get free investment advice and financial advice. They have, I think, four or five pages of lists of different languages that they have interpreters in. In case you ever do have a client who is speaking the Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole, or even an obscure dialect from China, there are literally every single language on that

interpreter site. You can call Fidelity for that investment advice from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM, Monday through Saturday.

We can go to the next slide, which will be my final slide before I turn over to Samantha.

[Testimonials]

This is, as BabySteps has turned five, we've been able to collect a lot of feedback from families over the years, especially most recently. I always like to end on this because you might think \$50 isn't that much, but families say otherwise.

"Something is always better than nothing." I feel relaxed. "The seed money makes it worth it even if they're unable to further contribute on their own."

"I've told everybody I know who has a kid since 2020", it's a wonderful idea, might not have thought about it otherwise when we had our first baby. It's fantastic.

I encourage you to take BabySteps with you, not only to your clients, but to your personal life and your friends and family as, again, this is for anybody in Massachusetts under the age of 1 to receive a free kickstart to start saving for their future.

I'll turn it back over to Samantha.

[Enrich]

If you have any questions, please feel free to put them in the Q&A, or if you'd like a deeper dive into training for your staff, definitely please feel free to let me know and I can get into contact.

(SAMANTHA): Thank you so much, Jessica. I'm excited to talk about some of our financial education programs that pair really nicely with BabySteps. If you do find yourself in a situation where you're serving families that might be eligible for BabySteps, these are great resources that you can pair with BabySteps. If you talk to a family about BabySteps, you get them enrolled. This is a nice second step that we really see these as a full circle that you get them started with the account, and then they can look to and see savings, budgeting, and planning opportunities that our office offers.

We'll get started with our financial education tools with a website that we have called Enrich. The URL for this website is masstreasury.enrich.org. We can send these links out so that you all have a chance to look at these websites on your own time.

Enrich is a digital financial education platform that our office launched in 2024. Prior to Enrich, we had another website you might be familiar with called My Financial Life MA. That was a similar platform, but we looked at a lot of different opportunities and different websites that are available. We really thought that Enrich seemed like a good fit for the people of Massachusetts.

What is really important to think about with Enrich is it has tools for both those who need to make a financial decision quick. We call that just-in-time financial education delivery. Say they have an unexpected medical expense. They receive a bill. They need to pay it very quickly, but they don't necessarily have the funds to do it. Enrich has resources on how to handle unexpected bills, unexpected financial situations. It's a one-stop shop that someone can go to and really get clear, trusted answers and guidance, especially if it's a financial issue that someone might not be familiar with.

Another example is, say, someone was living in an apartment. Unexpectedly, their landlord decided to sell their apartment. There are resources, information there about what they can do and what's next. Thank you, Sue.

[About Enrich]

Enrich is basically where Massachusetts residents can get answers. They can make a money plan. There's resources for people of all different ages and regardless of their situation. What happens when you go to Enrich is it creates individualized plans for the users based on exactly where they're at in their financial journey.

It also uses psychology and science around why we make the decisions we do around money. It's free. It's completely secure. It's accessible. It's available currently in five languages, including Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Chinese, in addition to English. They're always open to suggestions of different languages and ways to make their platform more accessible. It's not an app, so it is available as just a website right now. It

is mobile first, so it's very easy to use on your phone. You can go to the next slide.
Thank you.

[Getting Started]

How you get started on Enrich. First, you visit the website and you create your account. That takes less than a couple of minutes. It asks for basic information like your name, your email address. I believe it does ask for your ZIP code so we can get a sense of where people are using Enrich throughout the state. Then there's an opportunity to take some assessments. This is one of my favorite parts about Enrich.

You can take a money personality quiz, which I really like because I feel like it feels fun. It's a nice way to understand why you make the decisions you do. It's a really simple quiz that basically is like a personality test of, what do I do in these different situations? You can also find out what your financial stress score is. This really measures how stressed you are about your personal finances. There's a couple of different assessments that you can take to get started.

After you take one or a couple of those assessments, it's really up to the user. It will generate courses recommended by Enrich based on your personal needs and goals. As a user, you can take one of those courses. Maybe one is very relevant to you, or you can make it a goal to go through those courses regularly. This is also a really neat tool to do as a family or as a couple when you're making different financial decisions. It's something that you can do together.

Another thing that you can do when you're getting started on your Enrich journey is to check out the tools that they offer. In addition to the courses, there's an entire section of courses on a lot of different topics. There's also tools like credit simulators. There's a scholarship search that is really neat. You can put in what might be relevant if you or someone you know is looking to attain a higher education and the BabySteps 529 is not quite available to them yet. You can look at the scholarship search and it pulls from different databases across the country. It's really in-depth.

There's also budget templates. I like to think about Enrich almost like you need a budget or one of the other finance apps that are available, but those often have a cost

associated with them. Enrich is everything in one spot and it's free. It's a really good way to get engaged into regular financial behavior-changing habits through the tools that they have available.

One of the coolest features about it is it really thinks about how people can change their mindset around money. If you or one of your clients has grown up in a space where money wasn't talked about, it was feared, there's spaces in Enrich to really think about how to transform your thinking around how you connect with money and make it less of a fearful topic. There's an entire section called Money Mindfulness. There are meditations. There are journal prompts.

I like to think about this as almost like a free calm app. Those calm apps that I constantly get advertisements for on social media of those different mindfulness apps, I think that if you're a busy person, the social media knows how to get to you. This is a neat way to get those types of things for free. The state provides this free of cost. The data that we get is completely aggregate. We don't know what people are saying. It's completely private. We do know just generally how people are engaging with the platform.

I just want to share a couple of numbers of who has been using it this year so far. We've seen 1,300 people use Enrich. Over 100 people have completed that financial wellness checkup. The average score for people who've taken that financial stress score is 20. That's on a scale of zero, no stress, and 40 to high stress. It's right there in the middle, which I think is really interesting because it shows that people of all different experiences are using the platform.

We also are seeing that the key areas of interest are around budgeting and learning about investing. There's an entire section dedicated to investing. We know through our relationships with libraries, with elected officials, that people are really, really interested in growing their money and learning about investing. That's something that it's a great place for people to get started to think about that a little bit further.

You can go to the next slide.

[Valor y Dinero Seminarios |Worth & Wealth Seminars]

The next program I want to talk about is a workshop series we have called Worth & Wealth and the Spanish language cohort Valor y Dinero.

You can go to the next slide.

[Worth & Wealth/Valor y Dinero]

Worth & Wealth is a program that is sponsored by Citizens Bank. It is a combination of workshop webinars that are offered by our office and coaching. The workshops are held once a week. They launch in the fall typically. They're on some basic financial concepts like budgeting and saving for retirement.

We also bring in some specialized financial workshops as well. We work with Citizens Bank and the Financial Planning Association of New England, as well as other experts in different financial topics to present on the workshops. They're about an hour held once a week. We do the English cohort. Usually, that launches in the fall and it wraps up in the early winter. Then we launch the Spanish cohort, and we offer the same workshops or similar workshops in Spanish as we do in English.

If someone isn't able to make it to a workshop, they're all recorded. They live on our YouTube page. We actually are wrapping up our Valor y Dinero series today. Today is our last workshop for this spring, and then we'll relaunch the program in the fall. We can send out some information on how to make sure you're on our newsletter so that you can find out when that launches again.

Something that is really cool about the Worth & Wealth program and Valor y Dinero program is that we partner with a certified financial coach to offer free one-on-one coaching sessions. I love this because workshops are awesome. It's a great way to get people more comfortable and familiar with financial topics. It's a good way for people who might be in those transitional life phases. They know that they're going to be retiring in a few years. They know that their children are about to go off for college.

They want to start thinking about how they're going to change their finances and the way that they deal with money. Maybe they're going to have more money in the house.

They want to think about how they can invest that money or something like that. They're done paying for daycare. What do they do with that money that they've been dedicating to daycare for the past five years?

I'm already counting down the days there are no longer to be a daycare bill in our house. That's for sure, even though I love these ages with my daughter, but that's something that we're thinking of. Okay, we have this money that's set aside. These types of workshops are a really good way to start preparing for that. Really, workshops are good for making people more familiar and comfortable with the topics.

When it really comes to that behavior change, coaching is second to none. There's nothing quite like it. I'm sure many of you can attest to that in the work that you do, because I know that you're probably often working directly with clients. You see the difference it makes when you can have that one-on-one connection and really go through the specifics that they're experiencing.

That's what the coaching is there for. We have a limited number of coaching opportunities that we can offer throughout the year, but it's not limited to people that only go to the workshop. We say it's for participants, but we open it up to anyone who's interested as long as we still have availability. We still have coaching opportunities available through mid-May. If you or someone you know is interested, please visit our website.

You can sign up for a coaching session with our certified financial coach, Oriana. She is fantastic. She is a resident of Western Massachusetts. She speaks both English and Spanish. We've been working with her for about three years now. She also runs some of the workshops. If you don't necessarily want to engage with a one-on-one session, but you're interested in what goes into the coaching, you can check out our YouTube page and look back at some of the sessions she's done in the past.

You can go into the next slide. Thank you.

[Community Ambassadors (Title page)]

Now, I'm going to talk a little bit about our Community Ambassadors program, which is an initiative that we launched about three years ago. This week, we are actually welcoming all of our 2025 ambassadors to OEE, which is really exciting. Jessica kicked it off on Monday night with an overview of BabySteps for our new ambassadors. This is a program that I think will be really key and can work really well with a lot of the work that you all do in your communities.

You can go into the next slide.

[Community Ambassadors]

Community Ambassadors are volunteers that the Office of Economic Empowerment works with that help spread the word about our financial empowerment initiatives. They conduct community assessments, and they are basically spokespeople for the Office of Economic Empowerment in their community. They're already community leaders that have established relationships, are trusted advisors in their communities.

They go through training with our office. They receive a stipend to basically volunteer to spread the word about our initiatives at tabling events, by hosting workshops, by sending out flyers in their community.

Another really cool part of this is we invite all the ambassadors back to Boston at the end of their term. We invite them to meet with the treasurer and with our staff. We really are looking for feedback on how we can improve our policy priorities and our programs based on what they're hearing in their community.

We really see this as a way to make sure that our initiatives are driven by the people that they're designed to serve. We're a statewide office. We are in every single city and town. That's what we want to be, but we do know that there are certain communities that are intimidated by the concept of investing of finances. They have other barriers that are preventing them to get there. We really try to focus on those communities and making sure that there's a voice at the table of what they're experiencing and how we can better shape our initiatives.

As I mentioned, our 2025 ambassadors are getting started this week. We'll be announcing who they are on social media and on our website in early May. I can tell you that they're from communities from Boston all the way for the first time to the Berkshires, which we're really excited about. Some have actually been with us as ambassadors for previous years. Then some, this is their first time that they're engaging with our office.

If you live or work in a community with one of our ambassadors, please reach out to us because they're looking for tabling events. They also can host financial education workshops. They partner with financial educators in their communities. They're looking for opportunities to drive participation in these workshops or whatever workshops their communities are really looking for. Then they can also present to audiences on OEE programs.

You can invite them to present. Say, for instance, you work at a hospital. You have some community-building programming there, whether it be a new mom's group or a new parent group or something like that. You can invite the ambassador to go. They can talk about what opportunities are available. Talk about Enrich. Walk through the platform with people. Walk through what it looks like. Get them trained on BabySteps or anything along those lines. We're really excited about our ambassadors this year.

I do want to just mention before we go into the next slide that while we would wish that we could have in-person workshops in every single community of Massachusetts, we just, unfortunately, don't have the bandwidth to be everywhere at once. We have recently, in the last couple of weeks, launched a guide, a directory that lists all of the different financial education initiatives that we're aware of. If you are in a community that doesn't have an ambassador, we're happy to make that connection and help you get a workshop started in your community. We're happy to send out some more information about that as well if you think that might be relevant to you.

You can go on to the next slide.

[Next Steps]

I'll just wrap up with a couple of different things. I want to talk about how we can work together to spread the word about all these initiatives and make sure that your communities are aware of what they are. We have on our website, a free process for ordering materials for free. We pay for shipping, all the printing, everything directly to your office. We have rack cards or informational pamphlets essentially on BabySteps, on OEE, and on the Enrich platform.

These materials are dual language. If you need a language and you don't see it on there, let us know, and we can do our best to make sure that we can provide that. We also have some materials about other Treasury offices. We have this really cool bookmark called Your Financial Fairytale. It talks in addition about the OEE program that we've talked about today. It also talks about some of our sister programs throughout Treasury like Unclaimed Property. You all might be familiar with Find Mass Money.

It also has some information about the Veterans Bonus Program, which is a neat program for veterans that are returning or may have served and weren't aware that this program existed. You're welcome to take a look at those, the materials that we have available. We can get them to your office. We would love to see our pamphlets just hung up on waiting areas at parks in your community, at town halls, as many places as people can pick them up and take them and learn a little bit about what is available.

We also have graphics that are available that can be posted on social media. We're rolling out a new outreach toolkit for our partners. That will be coming soon on our website. Something that we know drives a lot of engagement with Enrich and with BabySteps is when organizations put some information about the programs on their website or in their newsletter. We're happy to send over some content that you can include on those spaces.

That's a really easy way to get engaged and vice versa. We're happy to make sure that if you have an initiative or program that you want us to amplify, we can do our best to spread the word throughout our tools as well. We're always looking for ways to feature

different organizations and different resources that are available that can really help Massachusetts families, especially when it comes to their financial lives.

I already mentioned this, but I'll just say it again. We are always happy to go on the road and present to your organization, table at your event, run an event if we're available to do so. Whatever you might have coming up, if you have a community health fair or something like that, if we can't be there, we're happy to send materials as well.

Jessica mentioned this earlier, but you can learn how to enroll families into BabySteps in as little as 15 minutes with our free one-hour training. Jessica and our partners at MEFA can schedule that. We're happy to get that started as well.

Then finally, I wanted to talk a little bit about our social media. We are on LinkedIn. We're on Instagram. We're on Facebook. That's a really great way to just learn a little bit more about the current topics that are happening on financial education. There's so much that's happening every day. I feel like it's overwhelming to turn on the news, but I feel like we've also been saying that for the past five years.

That being said, we really try to be very responsive on our social media. We have a real series where we talk about different financial topics. We also try to link it to different events that are happening throughout the year, whether it be aging adults awareness or something around small businesses. There's just so much that goes on throughout the year. We want to make sure that we're amplifying the messages that our partners have, especially when it comes to helping support their communities with their finances. We encourage you all to connect with us on social media.

Then one last thing I want to talk about, I didn't put this on the slides, but I thought many of you might be interested in some of the policy work that we do in our department. The state treasurer, Treasurer Goldberg, does file legislation that can help Massachusetts families with their finances. One bill that I did want to talk about was her goal of getting more financial education in Massachusetts schools. She has filed legislation that would require all districts to offer personal financial literacy.

Currently, our state, and I always hate to say this, but we are one of the only states to receive an "F" in our financial education delivery to schools. We are Massachusetts. We

don't want to be last place ever. While there are many schools across the state that do offer financial education, it's not enough. It's not offered to all students. It might just be offered to one class or it could be a half-semester class or something like that.

We know that preparing students before they go into the workforce or into college and they know what they're signing on to when they take out student loans is so important to their livelihood and also the economic health of our entire state. I just wanted to share that that we are working with the legislature to hopefully see that all school districts in Massachusetts do require personal financial education. If you're interested in learning more about that, you can visit our website. There's a lot of other resources out there that I'm happy to point you to.

Another policy proposal that I just also wanted to mention is Baby Bonds. We pulled together a task force to identify if Baby Bonds could be something that we could bring to Massachusetts a couple of years ago. Since then, the treasurer has filed legislation to bring Baby Bonds to our state. This is a little bit different than BabySteps. It's a basic idea that governments can set up a trust fund for children at or around birth that will grow until the child reaches adulthood.

It would be basically a way for children who are very low-income to have a nest egg that they can access once they turn adults. They can use that funds for a multitude of ways like opening up a small business, buying a home, saving for retirement, or pursuing post-secondary education. The purpose of this is to really look at the wealth gap and as a measure, one of many measures, that can help close that wealth gap.

You can go on to the next slide.

[Thank You!]

I think that just wraps up my presentation. I just want to say thank you to Jessica for her presentation on BabySteps. Thank you to all of you for listening today and for inviting OEE to present. We're really looking forward to partnering with all of you and happy to set up individual meetings and make connections if that seems like it would be a good fit for your organization. I just wanted to say thank you so much for all the work that

you do in your communities. We really look forward to continuing working with all of you.

(SUE): Thank you, Samantha. I want to wish everybody a wonderful rest of your day. Special thanks to Samantha and Jessica for providing us with this information. Have a great day, everybody.