



NEFE

National Endowment
for Financial Education

ANNUAL
REPORT **2021**



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MISSION, VISION & CORE VALUES

OUR MISSION

NEFE champions effective financial education. We are the independent, centralizing voice providing leadership, research and collaboration to advance financial well-being.

OUR VISION

NEFE envisions a nation where everyone has the knowledge, confidence and opportunity to live their best financial life.

OUR CORE VALUES



TRANSPARENCY



COLLABORATION



STEWARDSHIP



INTENTIONALITY

OUR ROLE



EXPERIENCE

With 30 years leveraging a legacy of dedication to the advancement of financial education, we use our experience, analysis and insight to provide guidance and support for the future of the financial education field.



UNIFIERS

We recognize the value in strengthening relationships with, and among, a broad cross section of organizations, steering collective wisdom and driving collaboration. As a unifying voice, we guide the national dialogue in the spirit of maintaining momentum.



VISIONARIES

We are a beacon of growth, impact and change for the collective movement to create effective tools for improved financial well-being. We ask the tough questions and challenge the community to reach beyond obvious answers.

2021 NEFE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



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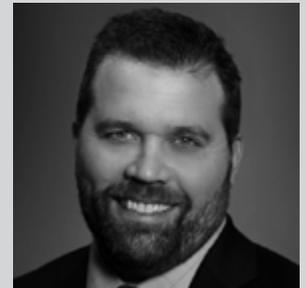
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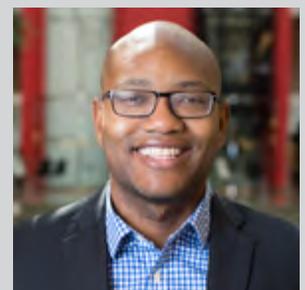
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FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

For another year we have acclimated operations in response to the pandemic. Our pledge is to adapt our service as long as necessary in support of our partners and financial well-being advocates. We are continuously inspired by what we observe across the field—resilience and adaptability.

This has been a memorable year of recognition for NEFE. In November, we received the “Setting the Standard” Award from the Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education (AFCPE). NEFE was recognized for work that “embodies a mission and vision to ensure that all people, regardless of income or background, have the opportunity to achieve lasting financial well-being.” And as 2021 concluded, NEFE was named Best Financial Nonprofit in Bankrate’s 2022 Social Honors, which spotlight influential people, communities and organizations that bring financial awareness and education to the masses. The editorial selection committee notes NEFE’s role in building access to equitable and effective financial education.

We are incredibly proud of the collective passion and accomplishments of our leadership and staff. To be told our work matters is rewarding, and we have genuine gratitude for being a part of our communities.

CONVENING OUR PARTNERS

Our year started with an exciting endeavor in partnership with the Council for Economic Education (CEE) to convene partners and advocates across the country to discuss critical issues in front of our field. Hearing from over 250 stakeholders representing 44 states provided relevant data and information to digest. We listened, reflected and now will respond. Our first step was publishing discussion summaries, which led to a series of podcasts to explore our future direction. We then added policy and advocacy as a significant area of our focus. This is just the start.

OUR VISION AFTER CURRICULUM

In 2021, we saw through our commitment to retire our educational curricula to focus on delivering high-impact research and facilitating greater collaboration in our field. We are excited to announce that CashCourse®, our college-age program, lives on through the Higher Education Financial Wellness Association (HEFWA). While our programs experienced decades of success, we know this was the appropriate decision at the right time. It opens doors for us to take on many new and equally important initiatives.

AN EXCITING RESEARCH MILESTONE

Last summer, NEFE’s research celebrated an exciting milestone, surpassing the \$5 million mark in external project funding. This landmark isn’t just about the dollar amount. It reflects meaningful partnerships and projects that provide relevant data and clarity around issues related to financial well-being. We expect to accelerate our research investment even more over the next few years.

KEEPING A PULSE ON WELL-BEING

We continued our series of national polls exploring Americans’ financial well-being as it is our responsibility to understand how individuals and families view their financial past, present and future. Throughout 2020 and 2021, we surveyed U.S. adults on how they were coping financially, their decisions to adjust and their vision for what the future holds. These data are some of the most important we have captured and will advance our polling efforts in 2022. We appreciate hearing from you how this information is helping you guide success in your practice, classrooms and research agendas.

Our field has not been stagnant over the past two years since the pandemic significantly shifted our personal and professional lives. Our progress in fulfilling our mission is creating greater momentum. This year will be particularly special as we celebrate NEFE’s 30th anniversary. We have some exciting things in store and we can’t wait to share them with you, whether in person or on-screen. We know this to be certain in 2022—that we will remain present, that we will continue our journey of collaboration and we will embrace our commitment serving as champions of effective financial education for all.

Billy J. Hensley, Ph.D.
PRESIDENT & CEO

Billy Hensley



Greg Maged
2021 BOARD CHAIR

Greg Maged



OUR HISTORY

NEFE's first endeavor with financial education emerged as part of the Denver-based nonprofit College for Financial Planning. The College was the nation's first educational institution providing financial planning coursework to professionals and created the standard-setting CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ certification. As the College expanded, NEFE was formed in 1992 to serve as the governing entity of the institution.

In 1997, the Board of Trustees shifted focus of the foundation's efforts primarily on financial education. NEFE transferred ownership, sold its assets and established NEFE as an independent, nonprofit operating foundation dedicated to personal finance education. Proceeds from the sale of the College financed an endowment, which funds the organization's work today.

In 2020, NEFE shifted focus from personal finance education programming to an institute that advances high-impact scholarly research and facilitates collaboration with practitioners, advocates and policymakers.



1972
The Denver-based nonprofit College for Financial Planning was established as the nation's first financial planning educational institution for professionals.



1984
The free, teen-focused High School Financial Planning Program® (HSFPP) launches.



1992
NEFE is formed and becomes the parent organization of the College for Financial Planning.



1995
NEFE is among the founding members of the Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy. NEFE leads in the establishment of April as Financial Literacy Month.



1997
NEFE sells the College for Financial Planning and fully funds the endowment to focus solely on its philanthropic education work.



2009
NEFE begins its partnership with the Society for Advancing Business Editing and Writing (SABEW) to support business journalists in the consumer finance space.



2008
NEFE serves on the first of three U.S. Presidential advisory councils on financial capability (2008-2009, President George W. Bush; and 2009-2015, President Barack Obama).



2007
NEFE launches CashCourse®, a free, online resource designed for college and university students.



2007
In partnership with the University of Arizona, NEFE begins the first-of-its-kind longitudinal study of college students following their financial journey to adulthood.



2006
NEFE begins funding research as the sole focus of its grants program.



2000
NEFE conducts its first of many expert convenings, which have focused on retirement challenges, gender issues, low-income families, life-changing events and more.



2011
NEFE launches the Financial Education Evaluation Toolkit®, an online tool to help financial educators evaluate the impact of their programs on learners.



2012
Through its partnership with the Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA), NEFE begins recognizing journalists with the Excellence in Personal Finance Reporting Awards.



2015
NEFE establishes the Five Key Factors for Effective Financial Education, a framework to help educators successfully deliver and evaluate personal finance instruction.



2016
NEFE begins sponsorship of the Cherry Blossom Institute, an annual research convening focused on financial education.



2019
NEFE joins the CNBC Financial Wellness Advisory Council, a group of experts, thought leaders and influencers in the personal finance space.



2019
NEFE publishes the first version of the Personal Finance Ecosystem, a tool defining the factors of financial well-being.



2022
NEFE celebrates its 30th year of operations.



2021
NEFE hits \$5 million milestone in research grant funding.



2021
NEFE and the Council for Economic Education virtually hold national convenings to explore opportunities and challenges in financial education policy and programming.



2021
For the first time in its history, NEFE is governed by a female-majority Board of Trustees.



2020
NEFE announces retirement of education programs to focus on research, enhancing knowledge impact and providing thought leadership. NEFE transfers CashCourse to the Higher Education Financial Wellness Alliance.



2020
NEFE unveils a new logo and brand reflecting its updated organizational priorities.

STRATEGIC GOALS: GUIDING OUR WORK

REDEFINING FINANCIAL EDUCATION

We are amplifying our role as a champion of effective financial education, pursuing theories, research and policy based on equity, innovation and impact. We will openly discuss the benefits and limitations of financial education, recognizing that education alone is not enough to overcome systemic barriers toward full financial inclusion.

RESEARCH IN ACTION

We are elevating rigorous, innovative and thought-provoking research focusing on the foundations of the Personal Finance Ecosystem. We are intentionally advancing our research agenda through thoughtful partnerships that inform the field and further influence financial education outcomes.

ELEVATING EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

We are reflecting on our successes as well as failures to speak authentically and transparently about what works and what doesn't in improving financial well-being. Educational and behavioral change theories are tested for validity through research and practice so that the guidance we offer originates from proven results.

BUILDING & MOBILIZING COMMUNITY

We are connecting a more robust network of scholars, intermediaries and advocates to explore new levels of leadership, partnership and community alignment. We listen to understand and openly share what we have learned to steward unity.

IMPROVEMENT WITH PURPOSE

We are continuously reviewing all policies and practices with the aim of capitalizing on efficiencies, leveraging staff talents and sustainably allocating our resources.

Visit [NEFE.org/Strategic-Plan](https://www.nefe.org/Strategic-Plan) for more info.

UPDATES FROM THE FIELD

NEFE values equity and inclusion and is making a greater commitment to evolve by investing in new communities, particularly among organizations that support diverse and under-resourced populations. This spirit of unity and collaboration is necessary as we work together toward real solutions. We will be steadfast in championing change and supporting those who take positive action.

FORWARD MOMENTUM

Over the last decade, our field has made great strides in both practice and research. At NEFE, we are identifying key factors of effective and meaningful financial education delivery, improving research quality to better understand links between education and wellness, and we have enhanced the Personal Finance Ecosystem, a framework illustrating the multiple influencers that impact financial well-being.

However, even if people are proficient in understanding personal finance topics, they still will not achieve their best financial lives if they face obstacles to financial participation, remain restricted by discrimination and bias, and do not have access to quality jobs and equal pay.



A NATIONAL FOCUS

President Joe Biden proclaimed April 2021 as National Financial Capability Month, calling upon all Americans to understand barriers to financial well-being, and take action to build their own financial capability and assist others to do so.

President Biden also noted the work of the Financial Literacy and Education Commission (FLEC), a 23-member body of federal agencies chaired by the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, created to coordinate and improve financial education for all Americans. FLEC members are helping address the financial challenges our country faces because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The White House also launched the Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence and Economic Opportunity for Black Americans initiative, ensuring that “Black communities have access to resources for economic success in areas such as financial education, small business development, entrepreneurship, arts, science, technology, engineering and mathematics.”

UPDATES FROM THE FIELD



Collaboration Is Vital to Improve Financial Well-Being

April 26, 2021

By **Billy J. Hensley, Ph.D.**, President and CEO National Endowment for Financial Education



FINANCIAL EDUCATORS AND COUNSELORS COULD BE “THE VACCINE” MANY NEED TO RECOVER FINANCIALLY

WORKING TOGETHER IS KEY

During National Financial Capability Month, Dr. Billy Hensley offered his thoughts on the importance of better collaboration among financial well-being advocates.

IN A CALL FOR UNITY, HENSLEY WRITES:

- All who seek to improve the financial health and economic mobility of individuals and families must work together to better understand financial fragility and collectively work toward effective solutions.
- We must continue to explore what works in legislation and develop models to reach diverse audiences with appropriate approaches.
- We must be transparent and honest about where we are missing the mark, particularly in meeting the needs of under-resourced populations.
- Leaders throughout the financial education community must come together and work toward common goals. I am certain that we can coalesce around best practices, build meaningful and lasting interventions, and evaluate our impact, which includes recognition of our success but also awareness of the continuous methods for improvement.



A true spirit of collaboration within the financial education community is necessary to unlock the doors to improved financial well-being for all Americans. Anything less than fully embracing our synergy is a disservice to those we all aim to serve. We are stronger together than as one.” – Dr. Billy Hensley

THE PANDEMIC'S EFFECT ON FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

NEFE continues to monitor the pulse of Americans by polling on financial well-being indicators at key moments in time since the COVID-19 crisis began. NEFE's June 2021 survey was the latest in a series spanning a 16-month period that overlaps the pandemic in the U.S.

85% of Americans confirm some part of their personal finances is causing them stress right now (as reported June 2021) with the most common concerns being:



When individuals consider their future financial situation, over **one quarter** think they will feel “very/somewhat worried” about their financial situation twelve months from now, while over **two in five** (42%) think they will feel “very/somewhat optimistic.”

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:



Seven in 10 (70%) have made financial adjustments due to the pandemic, such as cutting monthly expenses (29%) and putting off major financial decisions (20%).



More than **one quarter** (27%) are increasing contributions to their emergency/retirement savings, other savings or investments due to the pandemic, while 21% are tapping into emergency savings or borrowing against retirement savings.



Nearly **half** (47%) admit to living paycheck to paycheck, compared to 52% in December 2020.



Over **one in 10** (14%) are looking for a new job or are seeking additional work due to the pandemic.



Nearly **one in 10** (9%) plan to defer bill/debt payments and 13% have taken on more credit card debt, due to the pandemic.



Over **two in five** (44%) Americans have provided monetary/non-monetary assistance to family or friends due to the pandemic, with 17% saying the non-monetary support is ongoing and 13% saying the monetary support is ongoing. Among those providing assistance, 83% say it has caused at least some strain on their own finances.



Nearly **one third** (31%) of Americans say they have received monetary/non-monetary assistance from friends or family due to the pandemic.

It is our duty as champions of effective financial education to identify how Americans are feeling about their economic present and future at key moments in time. These latest results, combined with trends identified in previous polling, highlight the need for more diligent work to aid the plight of those most in need of financial well-being resources and interventions, including financial education.” — Dr. Billy Hensley

UPDATES FROM THE FIELD

FINANCIAL DECEPTION IN RELATIONSHIPS

NEFE released an update to its poll analyzing financial deception in relationships where finances are combined. This study continues to receive wide interest.

FINANCIAL INFIDELITY

Comingling finances while in a relationship means consenting to cooperation and transparency in your money management. “Financial infidelity” can occur when one partner commits an act of deception.

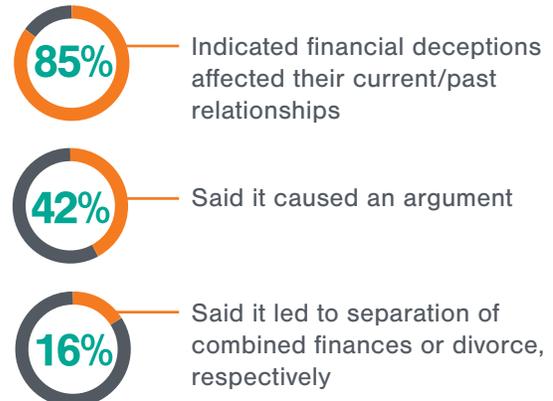
 In fact, 43% of individuals who have ever combined finances in a current/past relationship confessed to committing some act of financial deception.



REASONS FOR FINANCIAL DECEPTION*



EFFECTS OF FINANCIAL DECEPTION**

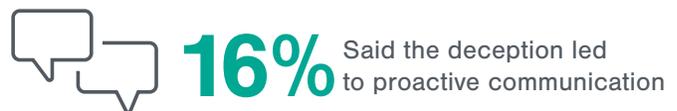


* Among U.S. adults who have ever combined finances in a current/past relationship and report having committed a financial deception.

** Among U.S. adults who have ever combined finances in a current/past relationship where one of the partners committed a financial deception.

SILVER LINING:

For some, financial deception provides a wake-up call.



When you comingling finances in a relationship, you're consenting to cooperation and transparency in your money management. Regardless of the severity of the act, financial deception can cause tremendous strain on couples—it leads to arguments, a breakdown of trust, and in some cases, separation or even divorce." – Dr. Billy Hensley

For more on NEFE polling, visit [NEFE.org/Research/Polls](https://www.nefe.org/research/polls).

BUILDING AN INSTITUTE MODEL

Last year, we announced our transition away from curricula to pursue other critical initiatives to help advance the field toward excellence. Throughout 2021, we put the pieces in place to shift our organizational structure to a research-oriented, institute model with a focus on Research, Policy, Insights and Engagement. The Institute aims to advance high-impact, scholarly research and facilitate collaboration with practitioners, advocates and policymakers.



BETH BEAN, PH.D.
SR. VICE PRESIDENT
Research & Impact

NEW SENIOR VP, RESEARCH & IMPACT

Beth Bean, Ph.D., was hired as senior vice president, Research and Impact in June 2021. Her focus will be on facilitating team conversations to refine the mission-centered work structure of the Institute, outlining key deliverables, increasing our thought leadership portfolio and developing strategies to enhance our external work. Dr. Bean's previous roles include a senior staff policy position on Colorado Governor Jared Polis' leadership team, as well as high-level roles with the Strada Educational Network, the Strada Institute for Future of Work and the Colorado Department of Higher Education.

"We are committed to shifting focus to drive improved thought leadership in the financial education field. We have made great strides and have put the pieces in place to launch the NEFE Institute, an arm of NEFE that will advance high-impact, scholarly research and facilitate collaboration with practitioners, advocates and policymakers." – Dr. Beth Bean

Visit [NEFE.org](https://www.nefe.org) for more on our staff.

INSTITUTE FOCUS

The latter half of 2021 saw the Institute staff convene to outline the important initial steps on how our experience, relationships and projects should be utilized toward our strategic shift. Discussions continued throughout the year on:

- NEFE's leadership role in championing financial education
- The Institute's alignment as key implementer of NEFE's organizational goals and contributor to the field
- Key initiatives we will address
- How we will define and communicate to targeted audiences

The Institute's initial deliverable was a roadmap outlining strategic, thoughtful endeavors that will serve as the first markers toward reaching our destination of becoming the preeminent organization that drives research and thought leadership in our field.



BUILDING AN INSTITUTE MODEL

MOVE TOWARD SYSTEMS IMPACT

Foresight, awareness and providing resources and data were fine ways to fulfill our mission, but it did not feel like quite enough. We think now it is more about listening, building community and focusing on the needs of all.

This was how we stated our shift toward systems impact in our 2020 Annual Report, and it stayed a major focus of ours throughout 2021. In parallel with developing the Institute's structure, we began the necessary due diligence of becoming an organization that aims for higher impact within the field and to advance our work to align with this new strategy. We achieved this with the development of the Financial Education Policy Convenings (see pages 14-15), a new approach for research dissemination and strengthening our ongoing partnerships with key organizations (see pages 18-20). Internally, we also developed a Strategic Impact Measurement working group that is building out internal evaluation metrics and processes to better measure our impact.

[NEFE.org/Initiatives/Cashcourse-Achievements.aspx](https://www.nefe.org/Initiatives/Cashcourse-Achievements.aspx)

How CashCourse helps students

CashCourse equips young adults and college students with unbiased, ad-free learning resources and information to help make informed financial decisions from college and beyond.

- Provides online financial education through educator led assignments and self-study
- Offers customizable financial tools, worksheets, quizzes, calculators and the Budget Wizard
- Thousands of articles and resources on reliable topics for students to gain a working knowledge of finances
- Award winning guide for young adults and students to find answers on real-life money questions

[NEFE.org/Initiatives/HSFPP-Achievements.aspx](https://www.nefe.org/Initiatives/HSFPP-Achievements.aspx)

High School Financial Planning Program

1984

NEFE launches the High School Financial Planning Program®, one of the first high-quality, free financial education curricula offered anywhere.

SAM History

- 2005** NEFE launches the national financial literacy campaign "Not if We Can Help It" to encourage adults to "get smart about their money". In the fall, the campaign consists of a series of PSA's directing individuals to the landing page SmartAboutMoney.org, which contains financial information and resources.
- 2006** By the end of summer, the SAM website has received more than five million pageviews.
- 2007** By the end of spring, website pageviews exceed ten million. In the fall, 40 Money Management Tips is published on SAM for young adults.
- 2010** Your Spending, Your Savings, Your Future Success is launched on SAM. The LifeSkills Quiz is launched on SAM.
- 2015** Financial Identity Quiz debuts on SAM.
- 2016** SAM launches Money Management Courses.
- 2018** SAM begins an annual initiative to sponsor learners to receive the Accredited Financial Counselor (AFC) certification through AFCE.
- 2019** SAM builds the first Diversity Reimbursement Program (DRP) and is named "Award for Financial Literacy."

[NEFE.org/Initiatives/Smart-About-Money-Achievements.aspx](https://www.nefe.org/Initiatives/Smart-About-Money-Achievements.aspx)

OFFICIAL PROGRAM RETIREMENT

In August 2021, NEFE completed the process for retiring its learner-facing financial education programs: the High School Financial Planning Program® (HSFPP), CashCourse® and Smart About Money (SAM). This change was an important part of our strategic shift, and we were committed to executing it in a way that fully considered the individuals and organizations that utilized these resources.



CASHCOURSE

We implemented a year-long program retirement strategy, which included consistent communications and timelines to allow for teachers, students and practitioners to explore other options. We then officially retired SAM and the HSFPP and donated the CashCourse program to the Higher Education Financial Wellness Alliance for continued use. The CashCourse donation included all the intellectual property, as well as grant funding and consultation through 2023 to ensure a smooth transition.

"We are incredibly humbled in NEFE's trust in us to be able to continue the legacy they have established with CashCourse. HEFWA is focused on helping find ways to improve financial wellness among students in higher education. Being able to provide CashCourse to institutions across the country is a big step toward this mission. We are looking forward to expanding our services to continue to make the alliance the premier organization for student financial wellness conversations and support." — Phil Schuman, executive director, Higher Education Financial Wellness Alliance

BUILDING AN INSTITUTE MODEL

NEFE TURNS 30!

In celebration of our 30th anniversary in 2022, we are undertaking several ambitious and exciting goals, many of which will be led by the Institute. Our cornerstone event will be the *Financial Education Innovation & Impact Summit*, scheduled for late 2022. It will be a celebration, but also an opportunity to collaborate with our partners and stakeholders. We expect it to reflect how far the field of financial education has come and set the course for the next three decades.

OTHER 2022 EXPECTATIONS:

- Personal Finance Ecosystem update and dissemination
- Announcement of recently funded research projects
- Expansion of consumer polling efforts and strategy
- Financial Capability Month activities
- Staffing increase
- Inventory of existing scales and how they define various outcomes and measurement
- Nationwide outreach to engage and serve new audiences
- Internal research on state high school financial education mandates
- Projects and new collaborations based on learning from the 2021 policy convenings



RAVEN NEWBERRY
DIRECTOR
Policy & Advocacy

FOCUS ON POLICY & ADVOCACY

NEFE's strategic shift toward thought leadership necessitated a new position to focus on working with policymakers on issues tied to financial education, as well as to track legislation and trends at the state and national level. Raven Newberry, who has been with NEFE since 2014, was promoted to director of Policy and Advocacy in August 2021, to leverage her background in public policy work.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES

NEFE identifies the following topics as research funding priorities. While our grants cycle is open to all eligible concepts, these priorities focus on NEFE's agenda.



MEASUREMENT: Reevaluate current financial literacy metrics and how financial literacy, behavior, perception, knowledge and skill can be measured more effectively.



SYSTEMIC INEQUALITY: Investigate knowledge, skill and wealth disparities, especially among populations that are statistically more likely to experience systemic barriers to improving their financial well-being.



DATA & METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS: Examine bias in order to help our field identify knowledge gaps and to strengthen research data and design by including voices traditionally less heard.



YOUTH: Examine inconsistencies in exposure to financial education among youth in the U.S. as well as variations in financial socialization and education within family units.



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Funding opportunities are offered through collaborative research as well as grants. NEFE offers one open grant cycle per year. In 2022, proposals will be due in the fall.

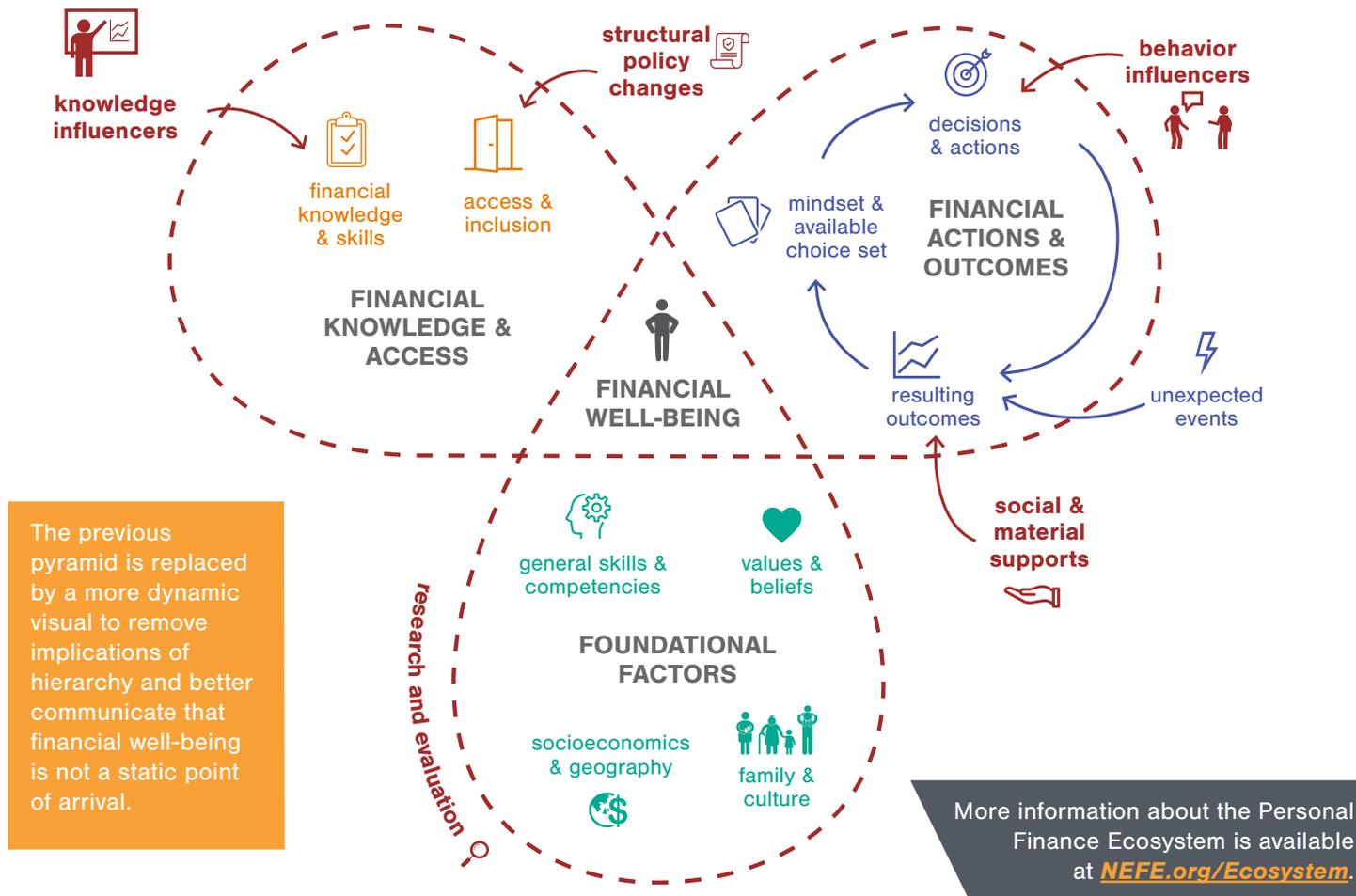
Go to [NEFE.org/Research-Funding](https://www.nefe.org/research-funding).

THE PERSONAL FINANCE ECOSYSTEM

NEW ECOSYSTEM VERSION RELEASED

In early 2022, we released the third iteration of our Personal Finance Ecosystem, a research-informed framework to help practitioners, researchers and policymakers understand the many factors that comprise and influence an individual's financial well-being, as well as see where their work fits into a larger context.

Since its debut in 2019, the Ecosystem has been a useful tool for a range of individuals and organizations working toward outcomes in financial well-being. From the beginning, we've invited feedback and observed how each version has been understood and applied. In 2021, we set out to incorporate all we had learned—through field input as well as our own observations of trends and research—and capture it in a fully updated graphic.



The previous pyramid is replaced by a more dynamic visual to remove implications of hierarchy and better communicate that financial well-being is not a static point of arrival.

More information about the Personal Finance Ecosystem is available at NEFE.org/Ecosystem.

The Personal Finance Ecosystem was designed for wide use across many different applications. It can be used to:

- Contextualize financial education among other interventions and illustrate various considerations when examining an individual's financial well-being
- Make deliberate decisions about how to evaluate personal financial education efforts and determine appropriate key performance indicators
- Determine the impact of specific catalysts for change on an individual
- Show intended cause and effect (not studied cause and effect) and galvanize researchers around establishing scientific links
- Orient those who are new to the financial well-being field
- Set expectations for the plurality of factors and interventions that could relate to—and inform—an individual's financial life and experiences
- Inform the elevation of practice, advancement of research, establishment of partnership and development of talking points for philosophical debate
- Help individuals understand the unseen forces at play in their financial lives as well as highlight opportunities for intentional change

FINANCIAL EDUCATION POLICY CONVENINGS

VIRTUAL FINANCIAL EDUCATION POLICY CONVENINGS

In January and February 2021, NEFE, in partnership with the Council for Economic Education (CEE), hosted a series of five virtual policy convenings to discuss relevant issues in the financial education field. Nearly 250 stakeholders from 44 states participated in these invitation-only events, which provided an open forum to learn and listen about the opportunities, technicalities and challenges encountered when considering statewide financial education policy and programming.



NORTH

How might we build consensus around essential competencies that support financial well-being and are relevant to the diverse cultures represented in the United States?



CENTRAL

How might we better support financial education in rural areas?



NORTHEAST

What are evidence-based alternatives to state financial education mandates and how effective are they?

WEST

What role might financial education play in equitable access to post-secondary education & training?



SOUTH

What does the research say is effective in financial education programming and where legislative dollars can be best spent?



Following the convenings, we participated in share-back sessions throughout the year with groups such as the Florida Prosperity Partnership, the National Association of State Treasurers, the Higher Education Financial Wellness Alliance, the Financial Literacy and Education Commission, and the Department of the Interior. This was an important step which allowed us to bring added depth to the discussions and codify our leadership on driving the field toward solutions.

FINANCIAL EDUCATION POLICY CONVENINGS

SUMMARIES AVAILABLE

In August 2021, we published summaries of the discussions from each convening. These documents include synopses of major themes covered throughout each session, key questions and responses, participant lists, resource materials, and ideas for next steps that different segments of the financial education field need to address.

More information about the Financial Education Policy Convenings is available at [NEFE.org](https://nefe.org).

FOCUS ON FIN ED: THE POLICY CONVENINGS PODCAST

NEFE began producing a limited-series podcast to make summary findings from the policy convenings available to a broader audience and to continue discussions of important topics raised during the events. The series is hosted by Dr. Billy Hensley and Raven Newberry, with special guests joining each episode to lend additional context, expertise and analysis about how the field can turn lessons learned into actionable next steps. The first episode was released in December 2021, with the remaining episodes scheduled for release throughout early 2022.



RESEARCH

2021 GRANTS AWARDED

IMPROVING MEASURES OF FINANCIAL LITERACY, WELLNESS & ATTITUDES AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS (BOSTON COLLEGE)

Existing measures of financial knowledge, well-being and attitudes lack a focus on college-going populations. This research seeks to create measures of these concepts specific to prospective and current undergraduate and graduate students that are valid across diverse populations. The primary researchers conducting this study are Dr. Angela Boatman and Katrina Borowiec.



BOSTON COLLEGE
Lynch School of Education
and Human Development

AN EXAMINATION OF THE KMSI-R: RELATIONSHIP TO FINANCIAL LITERACY & CROSS-RACIAL VALIDITY (TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY)



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
College of Human Sciences

School of Financial Planning

The Klontz Money Script Inventory-Revised (KMSI-R) assesses individuals' beliefs about money, which are defined by the following categories: money status, money worship, money vigilance, and money avoidance. The KMSI-R was developed using a sample of majority white population. This project seeks to examine which money scripts defined by the KMSI-R are most at risk for lower financial literacy and self-efficacy and examine the KMSI-R's validity on non-white samples. The primary researchers conducting this work are Dr. Miranda Reiter, Dr. Megan McCoy, Dr. Kimberly Watkins, Dr. Jesse Jurgenson and Dr. Kenneth White Jr.

THE INCOME SHARE AGREEMENT LANDSCAPE: OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE EQUITY & CONSUMER DECISION MAKING (RAND CORPORATION)

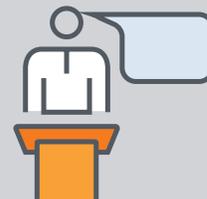
Income share agreements (ISAs) are a novel postsecondary financing mechanism with potential to expand access to postsecondary education. If the language used to describe ISAs is unfamiliar to consumers, they may struggle to make decisions in their best interest. This project will document how ISA structure, implementation and readability of materials vary by program characteristics in ways that could affect systemic inequity, generating actionable insight for equitable marketing and implementation of ISAs. This study is being led by Dr. Melanie Zaber, Elizabeth Steiner and Dr. Katherine Carman.



\$5 MILLION

**IN RESEARCH GRANT
FUNDING AWARDED**

In 2021, we surpassed the milestone of awarding \$5 million in grant funding for rigorous, innovative and actionable research in the fields of financial education and financial well-being. NEFE first awarded research grants in 2006 and since then has completed 37 projects.



RESEARCH

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



MEASURING FAMILY FINANCIAL SOCIALIZATION

Researchers at the University of Arizona and Brigham Young University developed new, retrospective and psychometrically tested measures of family financial socialization. The research team collected data from over 4,000 emerging adults and tested how these new measures of family financial socialization are associated with financial, relational and general life outcomes.

The measures are comprised of three sub-scales measuring Family Financial Socialization: The Parent Financial Modeling Scale, the Parent-Child Financial Discussion Scale and the Experiential Learning of Finances Scale. After collecting data from emerging adults, the three scales were found to be both valid and reliable. The creation of measures that can be generalizable across U.S. emerging adults will allow for the more inclusive and accurate study of family financial socialization and how it may relate to individuals' financial well-being.

This research project resulted in a published journal article: LeBaron-Black, A.B., Curran, M.A., Hill, E.J., Freeh, M.E., Toomey, R.B., and Speirs, K.E. (2021). Parent Financial Socialization Scale: Development and Preliminary Validation. *Journal of Family Psychology*.

The authors are conducting additional research utilizing these scales.

RESEARCH AWARDS

NEFE supports the researcher pipeline by investing in scholars who study financial well-being and education. In 2021, NEFE provided research awards to the following conference papers:

- “Racial Differences in the Returns to Financial Literacy Education” by authors Abdullah Al-Bahrani, Jamie Weathers and Darshak Patel. Award presented at the National Association of Economic Educators (NAEE) Professional Development Conference.
- “The Determinants of Student Loan Behaviors, Stress and Satisfaction” by authors Yu Zhang and Lu Fan. Award presented at the American Council on Consumer Interests (ACCI) Annual Conference.
- “Can Facing the Truth Improve Outcomes? Effects of Information in Consumer Finance” by author Megan Hunter. Financial Literacy Research Award presented at the Cherry Blossom Financial Education Institute.
- “Later-Career Unemployment Shocks, Pension Outcomes and Unemployment Insurance” by author Samir E. Mahmoudi. Rising Financial Literacy Scholar Award presented at the Cherry Blossom Financial Education Institute.



37

RESEARCH PROJECTS COMPLETED SINCE 2006

TOTAL DISBURSED FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS IN 2021

\$214,787

92

NEFE CITATIONS IN RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS IN 2021

For more on NEFE's research projects, visit [NEFE.org/Research](https://nefe.org/research).

OUR PARTNERS

COLLABORATION FOR IMPACT

NEFE partners with mission-aligned organizations to leverage joint efforts to shape, deliver and promote programs, initiatives and research. Our diverse partnerships span social services, education and media organizations. Here are selected highlights from 2021.

AMERICA SAVES (CONSUMER FEDERATION OF AMERICA)

The “Stealth Wealth Project: Literature Review,” a NEFE-funded project, in partnership with America Saves and completed by the University of Minnesota, was published summarizing research on the factors that influence emerging adults’ financial behaviors and decision making. The authors included research about socialization, demographic factors and individual characteristics of emerging adults. NEFE also sponsored America Saves 20th anniversary celebration.



CHERRY BLOSSOM FINANCIAL EDUCATION INSTITUTE

NEFE sponsored and supported the Global Financial Literacy and Excellence Center’s (GFLEC) Cherry Blossom Financial Education Institute, which featured presentations from scholars and discussion about their domestic and international financial education and literacy research.

CNBC FINANCIAL WELLNESS COUNCIL

Dr. Billy Hensley serves as a member of this financial wellness initiative made up of the foremost financial experts, thought leaders and influencers to offer personal finance information and strategies.



CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU (CFPB)

NEFE served as an expert adviser on the Financial Skill Framework and Scale.

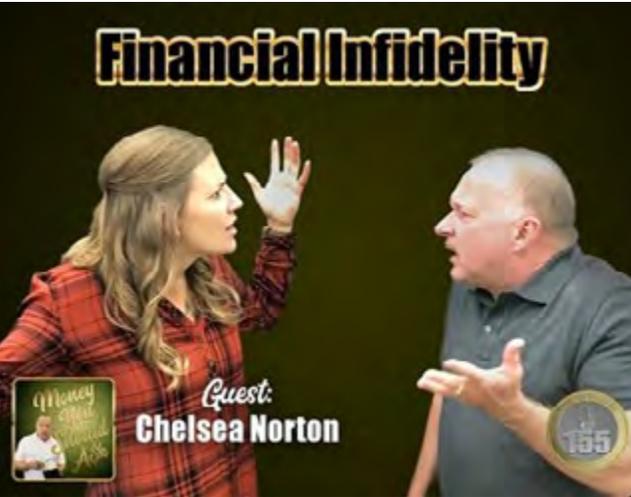
FINANCIAL CAPABILITY & ASSET BUILDING (FCAB)

NEFE was primary sponsor for the Financial Capability and Asset Building: Achievements, Challenges and Next Steps (2020-2025) convening, hosted by the Center for Social Development (CSD) at Washington University in St. Louis, and the Financial Social Work Initiative at the University of Maryland School of Social Work. Jill Jones, Ph.D., managing director of Research, presented at this two-part conference spanning 2020 and 2021 aimed to advance financial capability and asset building (FCAB) in research, education and practice, and strengthen networks among FCAB scholars, educators, professional associations and funders.



JILL JONES, PH.D.
Managing Director, Research

OUR PARTNERS



FINCON

NEFE continued its sponsorship of the FinCon conference for personal finance content creators and brands. Held in Austin, Texas, the event welcomed more than 1,200 in-person attendees and more than 500 virtual attendees. NEFE presented an overview of the Financial Education Policy Convenings with the Council for Economic Education (CEE) (see pages 14-15) and discussed the latest poll on financial infidelity with Bob Wheeler of *The Money Nerve Podcast*.

JUMP\$TART COALITION FOR PERSONAL FINANCIAL LITERACY

NEFE is a longtime national sustaining partner and Dr. Billy Hensley serves on the national board of directors chairing the governance committee. NEFE also supports Jump\$tart's partnerships, communications and education committees. In 2021, Jump\$tart released the updated and unified National Standards for Personal Financial Education, of which NEFE contributed. The standards can be found at www.jumpstart.org.



RADIO TELEVISION DIGITAL NEWS ASSOCIATION (RTDNA)

NEFE and RTDNA proudly presented the winners of the 2021 Excellence in Personal Finance Reporting Awards in September. Three journalists were recognized for their achievement in consumer finance reporting: Stephannie Stokes, WABE-FM National Public Radio in Atlanta; Chris Chmura, KNTV-TV NBC San Francisco; and Robert Powell, MarketWatch in New York.

SOCIETY FOR ADVANCING BUSINESS EDITING & WRITING (SABEW)

NEFE produced content for virtual conference sessions including income inequality and financial fragility, and the changing landscape of employee benefits. NEFE also continued sponsorship of the College Connect student blogging program at two universities during the spring and fall semesters.



OUR PARTNERS

SPOTLIGHT: AFCPE

Through its continued partnership with the Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education (AFCPE), NEFE continues to offer full sponsorships to help candidates receive their Accredited Financial Counselor® (AFC®) certification.

In November, NEFE was recognized by AFCPE with the 2021 “Setting the Standard” Award, which is given to organizations that believe in—and value—the highest standards in best practices, ethical behavior, diverse and inclusive communities, personal finance education, career advancement, information sharing, professionalism, and rigorous certification.



2021 Setting the Standard
Award Winner

NEFE's work embodies AFCPE's mission and vision to ensure that all people, regardless of income or background, have the opportunity to achieve lasting financial well-being. NEFE's generosity is helping to build capacity directly within communities, especially ones that are often underserved or overlooked."

— Rebecca Wiggins, AFCPE executive director

The AFCPE awards were presented virtually during the AFCPE Research & Training Symposium on November 17, 2021. NEFE staff also presented at several sessions during the Symposium.

AFCPE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT: CHRISTINA GILROY



I had never heard of the AFC or AFCPE until I was presented with the scholarship opportunity from NEFE. I began this journey in May 2018 and finally earned certification this past November. I have learned so much during this process and am eager to continue sharing this knowledge by helping others improve their personal finances. It will expand my future job prospects while allowing me to serve my community through volunteer educational activities. I am very thankful to NEFE for their assistance in my personal and professional development." — Christina Gilroy, TRIO Student Support Services Program

SPOTLIGHT: \$AVVY FILM DOCUMENTARY

Dr. Billy Hensley is featured as an expert commentator in this personal finance documentary about women and money. Two members of the NEFE Board of Trustees, Manisha Thakor and Megan Gorman, also supported the production of this film. NEFE participated in a screening at the Boulder (CO) International Film Festival in June. In 2022, NEFE is planning a nationwide screening tour with the producers of this film.



VISIBILITY

NEFE disseminates research, poll data and provides support to journalists in their consumer finance reporting. NEFE is frequently cited in media outlets across the country.

2021 MEDIA MENTIONS



1,327

TOTAL MEDIA MENTIONS

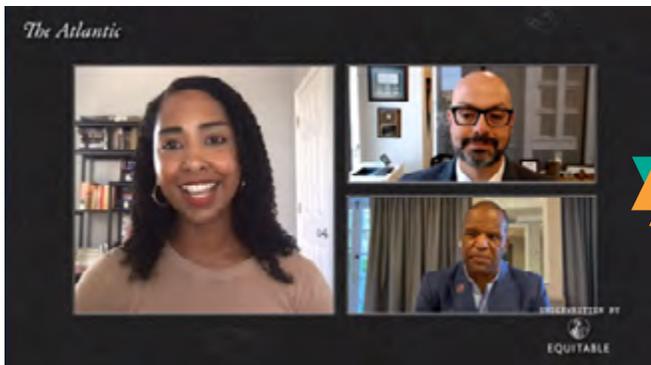


14%

OF OVERALL COVERAGE WAS IN TOP-TIER* MEDIA OUTLETS

*Top-tier = outlets with national reach, syndication of content and/or have reach over 500k impressions.

THE ATLANTIC FESTIVAL



Dr. Billy Hensley participated in The Atlantic Festival for a discussion on equity in personal finance with John Hope Bryant of Operation Hope. The festival featured prominent speakers from politics, business, science, technology and culture.

Let's put the 'personal' in personal finance. Let's demystify the topic of money and talk about it in a way that is relatable to all. – Dr. Billy Hensley speaking on financial education equity and access at The Atlantic Festival

2021 SOCIAL MEDIA



8,681

FOLLOWERS

3,021

TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS



32,642

IMPRESSIONS

1,960

ENGAGEMENTS

1,067

POST CLICKS

78%

INCREASE FROM 2020

81%

69%



Impressions = content display | Engagement = interactions with content



The NEFE Financial Education Evaluation Toolkit® helps educators increase the effectiveness of their personal finance curriculum. Assessing whether a financial education program is improving the knowledge, confidence and opportunities of learners is key to the field's understanding of advancing financial capability.

16,718

TOTAL USERS IN 2021



INCREASE FROM 2020

STEWARDS OF OUR MISSION & ENDOWMENT

NEFE is independently funded by its own endowment and operates as a noncommercial entity free from financial ties to other organizations. NEFE does not accept funding from government or corporations, except when an individual donor's company makes a matching gift. NEFE does not raise revenue through the sale of products or services. Growth of the endowment occurs through the investment of assets.

NEFE is a private operating foundation and subject to annual minimum spending rules by the Internal Revenue Service. All charitable activities, apart from grants, count toward the minimum spending requirement.

\$204*
MILLION

MARKET VALUE OF
NEFE ENDOWMENT

\$7.5*
MILLION

2021 ACTUAL
SPEND

\$6.4*
MILLION

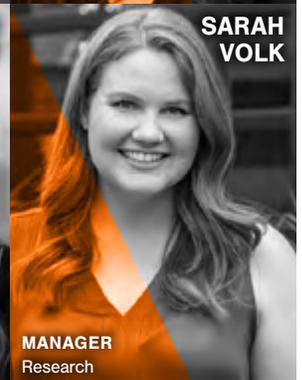
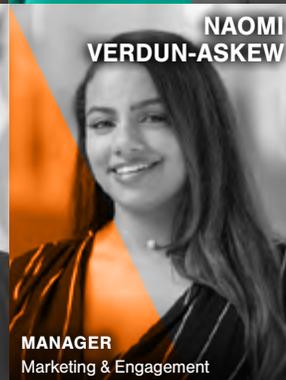
2021 MINIMUM
REQUIRED SPEND

ANNUAL MARKET VALUE OF ENDOWMENT & SPENDING



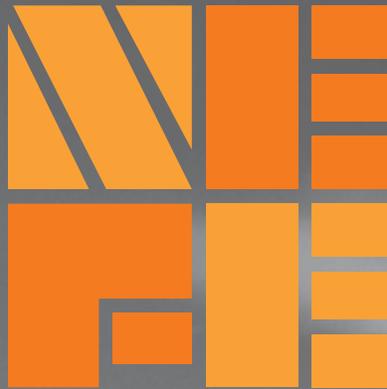
*Estimates as of 12/31/2021. See 990PF for finalized numbers.

NEFE STAFF



WE'RE TURNING 30!





Stay connected in 2022 as we mark our anniversary with a celebration of our history, legacy and future as champions of financial education.

CONTACT US



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