

**Support. Educate. Empower.
Soutenir. Informer. Habilitier.**

The need for Financial Literacy access and availability

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Introduction

Credit Counselling Services of Atlantic Canada Inc. (CCSAC) is a registered not for profit organization, providing confidential and professional credit counselling, education outreach services and debt repayment programs to families and individuals. We are a community service offering an effective alternative to bankruptcy.

We offer our services to all Atlantic Canada and ensure that our services are accessible. We offer bilingual counselling, materials and presentations in both official languages. We offer telephone counselling and on-line chat. We make a concerted effort to travel to rural areas to ensure we reach those who need our services.

We host semi annual seminars that are offered at no cost to the public. We also ensure that we partner with community organizations to increase our reach into the public.

What do we need to do to make financial education universal, relevant and accessible to all Canadians? What efforts would improve financial literacy education in Canada?

Part of the issue with financial literacy is that the reach of services does not always go as far as it should, and information on finances is not always reflective of rural and under serviced areas. Some areas we service only have one financial institution located in the community (and sometimes not even that).

Consideration must always be made for numeracy and literacy levels in dealing with finances. We always ensure prior to presenting to a group that we are aware of the education level and financial circumstances of whom we are presenting to and what they have indicated as their financial issues. There has to be flexibility in the programs delivered. There is never a one size fits all.

We offer presentations throughout Atlantic Canada, and travel to cover the areas that need presentations. Every year we are increasing the amount of presentations we are facilitating for work places, wellness fairs, community groups and associations. Our services are offered in English and French and we endeavour to reach into the rural and under-served areas in Atlantic Canada.

In fact, for 15 years CCSAC has been offering counselling and presentation services in both official languages.

Pour ceux qui exigent de l'aide dans la gestion de leurs finances, ceux affecté par la dépendance ou addictions, ceux affectés par des difficultés d'apprentissage, il est très critique que nous puissions les aider dans la langue de leur choix, que ce soit français ou anglais.

On nous demande assez souvent de faire des présentations dans les zones rurales et ces demandes sont fréquemment fait dans la langue française. Nous tentons autant que possible de combler le bosom qui existe dans es zones rurales.

Un commentaire que nous entendons assez souvent est: Si J'aurais été au courant do vos services 2 ou 3 ans passés, je ne serais pas clans la misère dont Jo m trouve au Jour d'hui. D'autres gens dont ii est encore temps de reprendre contrôle de leurs finances avec notre aide, sont très reconnaissants envers nos services et nous sert la main parlois avec les yeux plein d'eau, en nous remerciant. C'est cette reconnaissance qui valorise notre mission et qui nous fait sourire a la fin de la journée, avec un sentiment de mission accomplie.

Recommendations

Avenues for funding need to be made available to non-profit agencies that deliver financial education to communities and groups in rural areas.

Funding must be made available to educators to deliver financial education in both official languages.

A data-base of approved service-providers needs to be made available to the public in regards to financial education. There must be standards set and a description of their services must reflect the highest standards of their industry. There can be no ambiguity as to the services that are provided.

Recommandations

Des occasions pour la rOcolte de fonds doivent être dOvelopper afin de permettre aux Agences a but non-lucratifs d'offrir des sessions d'information concernant la gestion financière, particulièrement ceux qui vivent dans les zones rurales. Les fonds nécessaires doivent être disponibles afin de permettre l'éducation dans les 2 langues officielles en ce qui concerne la gestion financière personnelle.

Développer un système do base de données avec une liste de prestataires de services dans le secteur d'éducation financier. Il devrait y avoir des normes et

critères, avec une description de leurs services, qui rencontre les normes établies dans l'industrie. Il ne peut y avoir d'ambiguïté dans ce domaine.

Conclusion

Credit Counselling Services of Atlantic Canada already offers its services in English and French. We develop our materials to be accessible to the consumers we service in Atlantic Canada.

We also have the experience in adapting our materials and presentations to suit various numeracy and literacy levels.

Conclusion

Credit Counselling Services of Atlantic Canada offre présentement ses services dans les 2 langues officielles. Nous détenons également l'expérience et les matériaux nous permettant la flexibilité de s'adapter aux divers groupes à qui nous faisons des présentations. Nous développons nos matériaux et présentations qui conviennent au niveau du groupe à qui nous présentons.

Where we have had success

- 2009 we facilitated 88 presentations across Atlantic Canada (some examples: a partnership with the Salvation Army reaching those who need assistance, addictions, presentations in French, Presentations for persons with learning disabilities)
- We are a recognized financial education resource with various workplaces and programs such as government (i.e. province of NB, addictions), RCMP, Irving, Bell-Aliant, PEI Public Service Commission, etc.
- We held budgeting 101 public presentations and had a 86% increase in attendance
- All our counselling and presentation services are available in both official languages
- Our web site is fully translated (www.solveyourdebts.com/education)

Enclosed

- Materials in French and English
- Budgeting 101 promotion