

Financial Empowerment Advisory Team
Meeting notes: Feb. 3, 2026

Team Members: State Treasurer Elizabeth Steiner M.D., chair
George Katsinis, Oregon military financial counselor
Amy Theuma, First Interstate bank
Ashley B. Wilson, Oregon State Credit Union
Pamela Ranslam, Nixyaawaii Community Financial Services
Bandana Shrestha, Oregon AARP
Jennifer Satalino, The College Place Oregon
Darby Ayers-Flood, Talent Business Alliance
Scott Cooper, NeighborImpact

Academic Advisor: Prem Mathew, Oregon State University

Technical Advisors: Craig Vattiat, Division of Financial Regulation
Lane Thompson, Department of Consumer Business Services
Aujalee Moore, Oregon Department of Education
Codi Trudell, Department of Revenue

Presenters: Dr. Billy Hensley, President and CEO, National Endowment for
Financial Education
Juliana Crist, Senior Vice President, ABLE Programs, Vestwell
Ryan Mann, Director, Upward Oregon

Oregon State Bar Treasurer Steiner called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome

Treasurer Elizabeth Steiner welcomed members of the Financial Empowerment Advisory Team and guest presenters. She said Oregon schools are preparing for the adoption of a new personal finance graduation requirement in the 2026-2027 academic year and it will be important to ensure districts are prepared with relevant information to serve the school-age population. She said school-based personal finance instruction is an important beginning and life-long education is the overarching goal.

Agenda Item 2 – Progress and Challenges for Financial Education in 2026

Treasurer Steiner introduced Dr. Billy J. Hensley, President and CEO, National Endowment for Financial Education.

Dr. Hensley congratulated Oregon for its new personal finance requirement and said it comes at a time when financial education has strong momentum across the country, with 30 states including Oregon moving forward with a standalone requirement which has been shown to be more effective than embedding the teaching in other subjects such as social studies. He presented data that shows that financial education makes a

difference. Students who completed a personal finance course in the study had credit scores that were up to 40 points higher within five years.

He emphasized the need for robust professional development for teachers, and also highlighted the need to keep curriculum relevant to current trends and topics such as cryptocurrency, inflation and financial tools

He said the Foundation appreciates the Oregon Financial Wellness Scorecard and has promoted it nationally as a way to help people advance policy conversations based on data.

Jennifer Satalino asked about online influencers and financial advice. Dr. Hensley said “finfluencers” can have huge followings and some have been known to share misinformation, which underscores the need for critical evaluation skills as part of curriculum.

Student Loan Ombuds Lane Thompson asked about recommendations for how to best teach about new financial products like buy now pay later. Dr. Hensley cited the work of content developers like next gen Personal Finance and the Council for Economic Education, and also said teachers can work together to create communities of practice and share knowledge, experiences and strategies.

Scott Cooper asked about culturally responsive financial education for tribal communities and English as a second language (ESL) learners. Dr. Hensley said the foundation recently worked with a visiting scholar, Stephanie Cote, on how to adapt curriculum to native populations. He also mentioned a recent grant to create a glossary of financial terms in American Sign Language.

Department of Education liaison Aujalee Moore asked about navigating the vendor marketplace for financial education curricula and materials. Dr. Hensley cited the Jump\$start clearinghouse as a place to start and where materials can be searched by cost and alignment with content standards.

Treasurer Steiner asked about resources for young and middle-aged adults. Dr. Hensley said the quickest way to shift that culture is to model talking about money.

Agenda Item 3 -- ABLÉ Savings for People with Disabilities: Eligibility Expansion and Outreach

Treasurer Steiner said some exciting news at the beginning of 2026 was the change in ABLÉ accounts so that people are now eligible if their disability age of onset is before the age of 46 – a significant increase from the previous age of 25.

Ryan Mann, Director of Upward Oregon, introduced the Treasury business unit which oversees the state’s public defined contribution savings programs and also coordinates the broader financial fitness initiative for the Treasurer. He also introduced the Oregon ABLÉ Savings Plan which allows people to save while also protecting eligibility for asset-tested aid like Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income.

Juliana Crist, Senior Vice President, ABLE Programs, Vestwell , presented about the expansion of the ABLE eligibility and demographic shifts. She also said the accounts could be valuable even to those who are not receiving government benefits, likening them to “supercharged” Roth IRAs.

Ms. Crist said there are about 100,000 ABLE accounts across the country, which represents only about 2% of the eligible population. (In Oregon, there are about 10,000 accounts and 252 new accounts opened in January.)

She identified target populations for outreach including those with mental health conditions, veterans and financial advisors and estate attorneys.

Amy Theuma encouraged the Oregon ABLE program manager to seek ways to improve account user experience, such as ensuring so savers can get money faster.

Treasurer Steiner asked if eligibility for ABLE begins when there is a disability diagnosed, like Multiple Sclerosis without symptoms, or not until there is a disabling condition. Ms. Crist said you become eligible when symptoms start affecting your life.

Agenda Item 4 -- Roundtable

Ashley Wilson shared an update from Go West Credit Union Association, and member institutions reached 11,000 students in 2025 through financial reality fairs in Western states.

Pamela Ranslam offered an update about Nixyaawaii Community Financial Services, and their homeownership program. A grant from Oregon Housing and Community Services is helping to complete a subdivision to help more tribal members buy homes. She also offered a brief history of the business, which is a native certified CDFI.

Scott Cooper attended the Community Action Partnership meeting and said the federal administration is encouraging nonprofits to seek funding to do work with foster children and families, and one aspect is opportunities for asset building and financial education. He said among the homeless population, 37% report being former foster children.

Craig Vattiat said the Division of Financial Regulation has produced a homeowners’ bill of rights and is launching a continuing education course for investment advisors about Oregon’s Senior Safe law that requires people to report suspected senior financial exploitation.

Lane Thompson highlighted a multistate student loan ombudsman webinar on March 18 that will discuss the evolving federal landscape for borrowers.

Codi Trudell said tax season is ramping up and the Oregon Department of Revenue is still offering a free direct file option to the public, even though the federal version was eliminated by the IRS.

Aujalee Moore said most Oregon districts are not seeking the allowable one-year waiver for the implementation of the state's personal finance requirement that begins in 2027. She also said a spring webinar planned by the Department will include several state agencies which will highlight resources that teachers can utilize as part of the new course.

Agenda Item 5 -- Oregon Financial Wellness Scorecard

The annual scorecard is planned for a March 5 release. The 2026 edition will be the fourth scorecard.

Agenda Item 6 -- Advisory Team business and advance calendar

Treasurer Steiner said the deadline for nominations for the financial empowerment awards is March 1. The winners will be announced in April.

She encouraged members to highlight their financial literacy month events.

She explained that the three new subcommittees will meet over the course of the year, and each panel will have a chair or somebody who will help organize their independent subcommittee meetings and offer updates to the rest of the Team during regular quarterly meetings of the full team. The formal recommendations will be presented next February. The subcommittees are focused on Education, Resilience and Consumer Protection.

Agenda Item 7 -- Public comment

No public comment was entered.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:22 p.m.