

Challenges & Successes: Bankruptcy Education in Americus, Georgia

Joan Mason, University of Georgia Cooperative Extension

Key Words

Bankruptcy, rural South Georgia, lifestyles, low literacy, practical application, outcomes

Target Audience

The Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act (BAPCPA) mandates that consumers participate in a 2-hour financial educational program to receive a discharge from their bankruptcy case. Cooperative Extension Family & Consumer Sciences (FACS) Agents offer a financial management course, Personal Financial Choices, to consumers that have filed bankruptcy.

Objectives/Purpose

The curriculum addresses different elements of personal financial management with program objectives including:

- To understand the importance of communication and personal planning;
- To increase the knowledge of managing your money;
- To obtain tools to use in tracking their money, developing a personal spending plan, and saving for the unexpected expenses;
- To gain awareness of sales techniques, hidden costs, telemarketing fraud, and mail scams;
- To understand the importance of restoring their credit and the wise use of credit.

The purpose of this financial management course is to educate the participant focusing on intensive one-on-one financial management skills with outcomes showing behavioral changes in dealing with their finances.

Content/Description

The presentation will begin with a brief outline of the “Personal Financial Choices” content moving into an overview of the challenges and successes in bankruptcy education in Americus, Georgia. Client profiles will be used to show the unique situations leading to bankruptcy, followed by anecdotal reviews that will give the participant a better understanding of the bankruptcy cycle in Americus, Georgia.