

CYGNET INSTITUTE

OF PERSONAL FINANCIAL LITERACY

www.CygnetInstitute.org

A Fiduciary Tax Exempt 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Financial Educator
Teaching people how to make good financial decisions to achieve their goals since 1989

Instructors Are Prohibited from Soliciting or Referring Participants as Clients

“Peace of mind comes when your life is in harmony with true principles and values and in no other way.”
- Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York, Simon & Schuster Inc., 1989

PERSONAL FINANCIAL WELLNESS TRAINING CATALOG

2021



COURSES ARE NOW AVAILABLE AT



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COMMUNITY
COLLEGE®**

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INTRODUCTION

Participants in this series of educational programs will be taught the basics of the financial planning process and the relevance of economics on which financial planning is based, while developing various aspects of a financial plan for themselves.

The series consists of various modules which are based on experiential learning methods and are self completing with tasks and homework. In contrast to seminars and “workbook” workshops, the Cygnet modules require the use (or acquisition) of skills in the area of critical thinking and economic principles, as individuals are guided to address their personal financial goals with adherence to the Fiduciary Standard.

Although these modules are independent of each other, they arranged to address a combination of financial planning issues relating to a person’s interests. Each of the modules involves elements of the course of study requirements in the Certified Financial Planning™ (CFP®) program. In addition to focusing on economic validity, the modules are also designed as a hands-on experience for the participant and their personal finances.

As a result, upon completion, participants have a better working knowledge of the key issues regarding their personal financial situation and now possess the skills necessary for proper financial management. These issues encompass the areas of **Retirement, Estate Planning, Trusts, Investments, Taxes, Benefits, and Insurance.**

The modules can also be of value to individuals who are considering a career in fee based financial planning. Completing these courses provides the dual benefit of experiencing an unbiased financial planning process where you build your own financial plan while at the same time decide whether you want to pursue a career as a financial planner.

Regardless of which module or combination of modules a participant takes, one of the key outcomes is that they become more confident in making good financial decisions.

The list of courses described in this document represents a menu of modules. Each of the modules in our inventory of workshops was designed to address the specifications as requested by each of the various employer groups we have worked with over the years (GM Powertrain, Amerisure 401k, UAW, A&P/Farmer Jack 401k). With our expertise and experience, we can design effective workshops for any venue to meet the educational/training and financial wellness goals of any group.



ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES: THE CONCEPTS BEHIND FINANCIAL LITERACY

Personal Financial Management is a derivative activity based on economic principles and concepts. It is a process that has become necessary as the complexity of our financial lives continues to increase. To fully comprehend the various aspects of the financial planning process, one must understand some core economic principles. The financial decisions a person makes will generally involve one or more of the following:

◆ **SCARCITY** necessitates choice. Everything we do reflects a choice we make. If we can't have everything we would like, we must choose those things we want the most. The more choices we make that reflect conscious decision-making, the more control we have over the quality of our lifestyle.

◆ **OPPORTUNITY COST** is the forgone benefit of the alternatives not chosen. This is where the concept of "trade-offs" plays a key role in making decisions when choosing a certain service or product over another. Perhaps without realizing it, consumers continuously practice "marginalism" as they consider how much to buy of one product or service versus something else in an effort to obtain the mix of goods and services that will provide them with the greatest satisfaction for their available buying power.

◆ **INCENTIVES** are factors that motivate and influence human behavior. Impact of economic incentives is related to the perceived benefits associated with various goods and services which tend to influence economic decisions.

◆ **ECONOMIC SYSTEMS** is the collection of institutions, laws, activities, controlling values and human motivations that collectively provide a framework for economic decision-making. Our system is a market economy of decentralized decision-making in which individuals can act as consumers, producers, workers, savers and/or investors. People participate in this market through decisions that are reflected in the supply and demand for various goods and services.

◆ **PRODUCTIVITY** is the amount of output (goods and services) produced per unit of input (productive resources) used. The three principal means of increasing productivity are: (1) specialization and the division of labor; (2) investment in capital goods; and (3) investment in human capital.

◆ **TRADE** or exchange is the distribution of the excess output created by producers which they themselves cannot consume. Money helps facilitate this exchange. As productivity improves through specialization, personal self-sufficiency becomes less necessary and is replaced by the need for interdependence. This means that decisions or events in one part of the world or one sector of our economy can effect decisions and events elsewhere. This concept of interdependence applies also to the time dimension. This means that financial decisions made today will impact financial decisions and circumstances in the future.

At its core this Workshop series is designed to teach the practical application of a 5-step decision making process as it applies to personal finance.

1. Define issue → 2. Establish criteria → 3. Identify alternatives → 4. Evaluate alternatives → 5. Make decision

WHY IS FINANCIAL WELLNESS IMPORTANT?

- ▶ **Economic integrity** and understanding are very important elements in building and maintaining a successful economic life.
- ▶ **A financially secure individual is more apt to focus on their job** in a way that leads to a successful career. An individual's successful career can also be a positive component in the employer's success.
- ▶ **An accurate understanding of financial issues between spouses** significantly reduces problems among family members. It reduces one of the biggest stress points between spouses.
- ▶ Unbiased financial planning can help individuals to better **understand the direct financial link that exists between their interests (their wages and benefits) and the interests of their employer**. This objective approach eliminates the obstacles commonly encountered when the planning is provided by salesmen.
- ▶ Individuals who are knowledgeable about their personal financial needs and possess the appropriate skills are less likely to waste money and resources when addressing their financial issues. They **become more self-reliant and not as easily manipulated** by the financial industry - Banks, Investment and Insurance companies.
- ▶ **An individual's perception of their present and future lifestyle** is the proper gauge to use when measuring the condition of present and future finances. Cygnet's financial planning courses are training tools that can help identify the proper balance between lifestyle goals, career and compensation. Learning how to honestly focus on their circumstances - and without the specter of a sales pitch - individuals get a clearer understanding of their financial situation and future goals. This transparent approach gives students the confidence to believe in their financial plan and stick to it..
- ▶ **Cygnet specializes in providing courses that help each individual (and spouse) take control** of their personal financial condition by educating them about the economic relationship that exists between their long-term personal welfare and the long-term success of their career(s). This is a critical issue that everyone, including those who have retired, must understand in order to protect and maintain the quality of their personal financial lifestyle.

BUSN-1879: FINANCIAL PLAN CHECKUP

Are you Financially on Track?

COURSE ABSTRACT

A **Personal Financial Management** training course based on in-class data-entry and computation. It will teach participants how to develop a “pro forma” of their future finances to determine if their current decisions will result in acceptable outcomes in later years. It is done in the context of exploring alternatives in their decision-making process and helping participants recognize the role of economic principles such as **opportunity costs** and **scarcity** in their personal finances.

Frequency: Two 2½-hour sessions over the course of two weeks

Course Fee: \$395/unit

Class Size Minimum: 10 - Maximum: 25

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Objectives

- Participants will be taught the following:
- The importance of budgeting in dealing with wages and benefits.
- How to build their own process for making financial decisions and avoid media hype.
- Method for evaluating financial consequences and risks to their plan.
- Various strategies for accumulating and funding future goals.

Action Steps

1. Organize their spending and build a filing system for managing their finances.
2. Identify all relevant resources with respect to all their benefits.
3. Identify and prioritize all financial issues.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Participants will achieve competence in the following:

- Learn the computations relating to Present Value, Future Value and Compounding
- Know where to find additional resources and financial tools and be able to use them.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Spouse may attend at no extra cost.

Text: *To Be Determined*

Materials: Assorted publications by the Federal Reserve, Social Security, FHA, FTC, SEC, NAIC, etc. will be distributed. Also use of interest and annuity tables. Calculator required.

Grading: Certificate of completion will be issued.

BUSN-1880: FAMILY ESTATE PLANNING

Experience Peace of Mind by Reducing Conflicts and Costs

COURSE ABSTRACT

A **Personal Financial Management** training course designed to help the participant objectively develop the issues that would need to be addressed in the event of premature death or disability. This workshop will cover the role that insurance plays and how to best utilize the insurance benefits available at work. It will cover the legal instruments (Wills, Living Trusts, etc.) typically needed. It is done in the context of personalizing the decision-making process and helping participants internalize the economic principles of **incentives** and **opportunity costs**. At the conclusion of the course, participants will have a printed copy of their own estate plan that can be taken to a knowledgeable attorney for drafting and execution.

Frequency: Three 3½-hour sessions over the course of 3 weeks.

Course Fee: \$378/unit **Class Size** Minimum: 10 - Maximum: 25

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Objectives

Participants will be taught the following:

- How to figure out how much life insurance they should have.
- How to identify and quantify the financial and non-financial needs of the survivors.
- What legal documents they need to consider and the implications of the various provisions in each. (i.e. Living Trusts, Living Wills, Durable Power of Attorney, Education Trusts, Insurance Trusts, etc.)

Action Steps

1. Dispel "conventional wisdom" traps behind the need for estate planning.
2. Work through the details to quantify the financial needs of those left behind.
3. Analyze the various legal instruments and strategies and how they ought to be applied.

COURSE OUTCOMES

- Participants will achieve competence in the following:
- Understanding estate taxation and distribution issues pertaining to their family.
- Using a gifting strategy to achieve their estate planning goals.
- Understanding how to use the various types of living trusts and other legal instruments.
- Learn how to shop for the right type of insurance.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Spouse may attend at no extra cost.

Text: Handouts are used which reflect the law and taxes at the time of each class

Materials: Assorted publications by the Federal Reserve, Social Security, FHA, FTC, SEC, NAIC, etc. will be distributed. Also use of interest and annuity tables. Calculator required.

Grading: Certificate of completion will be issued.

BUSN-1881: SUCCESSFUL PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT

An Institutional Approach to Investment Decisions

Course Abstract

A **Personal Financial Management** training course in which participants will learn the principles and strategies for maintaining a long-term goal-oriented investment plan. Using the investment vehicles available through work and outside they will design their own generic portfolio plan for achieving their investment targets of growth and cash flow. At the conclusion of the course they will have their own printed Asset Allocation Strategy which will enable them to develop an Investment Policy Statement. It is done in the context of personalizing the decision-making process and helping participants internalize the economic principles of *incentives*, *productivity* and *economic systems*.

Frequency: Three 3½-hour sessions over the course of 3 weeks.

Course Fee: \$660/unit **Class Size** Minimum: 10 - Maximum: 25

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Objectives

Participants will be taught the following:

- How to optimize investment return and synchronize with retirement.
- How to coordinate their investment strategy with all of their investments (pre-tax and after tax).
- The practical aspects of Modern Portfolio Theory and its use in developing their Personal Asset Allocation Strategy.

Action Steps

1. Dispel “myths” that defeat effective investment strategy.
2. Demonstrate the benefits of a disciplined approach to proper asset allocation.
3. Guide participants through the practical steps in developing an investment policy.

COURSE OUTCOME

Participants will achieve competence in the following:

- Measuring time-weighted portfolio performance.
- Computing return on investments.
- Judging investment risk and evaluating using the internet.
- Understanding investment terminology and proper use of prospectus.
- Understand income tax implications pertaining to decisions regarding investments.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Spouse may attend at no extra cost.

Text: *To Be Determined*

Materials: Assorted publications by the Federal Reserve, Social Security, FHA, FTC, SEC, NAIC, etc. will be distributed. Also use of interest and annuity tables. Calculator required.

Grading: Certificate of completion will be issued.

BUSN-1882: PRE-RETIREMENT CASH FLOW PLANNING

Financial Planning: The First 30 Years

COURSE ABSTRACT

A **Personal Financial Management** training course designed to help participants get a clear picture of their current financial situation and teach them a system for developing a course of action that blends their future quality of life with their job/career goals. It is done in the context of personalizing the decision-making process and helping participants internalize the economic principles of **scarcity**, **opportunity costs** and **productivity**.

Frequency: Three 3½-hour sessions over the course of 3 weeks.

Course Fee: \$619/unit

Class Size Minimum: 10 - Maximum: 25

COURSE SYLLABUS

Objectives

Participants will be taught the following:

- A system for developing control over their total financial picture.
- How to identify their current lifestyle patterns and how to anticipate future changes and ways to plan for those changes. Both positive changes and negative changes.
- How to identify inconsistencies between spending for today and saving for the future and methods for systematically resolving them according to their lifestyle priorities.

Action Steps

1. Identify future job/career stages.
2. Assemble the details of current lifestyle.
3. Develop blueprint of future lifestyles.
4. Use "what if" scenarios for fine-tuning finances.
5. Develop implementation strategies to achieve goals.

COURSE OUTCOMES

- Participants will achieve competence in the following:
- Determining financial strengths and weaknesses.
- Financial decision making.
- Goal setting.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Spouse may attend at no extra cost.

Text: *To Be Determined*

Materials: Assorted publications by the Federal Reserve, Social Security, FHA, FTC, SEC, NAIC, etc. will be distributed. Also use of interest and annuity tables. Calculator required.

Grading: Certificate of completion will be issued.

BUSN-1883: POST-RETIREMENT CASH FLOW PLANNING

Dealing with Benefit Changes while on Fixed Income

COURSE ABSTRACT

A **Personal Financial Management** training course designed to help participants test their assumptions about their retirement lifestyle to determine if their plan is on track to produce satisfactory results. This is especially critical when faced with reductions in benefits. It is done in the context of personalizing the decision-making process and helping participants internalize the economic principles of **trade** and **economic systems**.

Frequency: Two 3½-hour sessions over the course of two weeks

Course Fee: \$425/unit

Class Size Minimum: 10 - Maximum: 25

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Objectives

- Participants will be taught the following:
- How to project lifestyle expenses for their retirement years.
- To quantify all retirement income sources (e.g. social security, pension, etc).
- Develop a strategy to accommodate reductions in benefits
- How to determine if they have saved enough or too much.
- To test the effect of one-time lump sum **expenditures** (boat, trailer, condo, etc...).
- To test the effect of one-time lump sum **incomes** (sale of house or other property).

Action Steps

1. Build decision making model for projecting and managing benefits.
2. Use of interest and annuity tables to project and test financial alternatives.
3. Identify contributions of free market economy to the investment decision.

COURSE OUTCOMES

- Participants will achieve competence in the following:
- Understanding their retirement and social security benefits.
- Evaluating cash flow projections.
- Managing the risk in various benefit decisions.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Spouse may attend at no extra cost.

Text: *To Be Determined*

Materials: Assorted publications by the Federal Reserve, Social Security, FHA, FTC, SEC, NAIC, etc. will be distributed. Also use of interest and annuity tables. Calculator required.

Grading: Certificate of completion will be issued.

BUSN-1884: RETIREMENT DECISION WORKSHOP

Should You Go Now or Wait

COURSE ABSTRACT

A **Personal Financial Management** training course designed to help participants decide whether or not to retire in the near future by properly analyzing their benefits by coordinating the financial and psychological aspects of retirement. It is done in the context of personalizing the decision-making process and helping participants internalize the economic principles of **scarcity**, **opportunity costs** and **incentives**.

Frequency: Four 3-hour sessions* over the course of 2 or 4 weeks

Course Fee: \$785/unit

Class Size Minimum:10 - Maximum: 25

*This course can be designed for delivery in a single 8-hour session or in 2 half-day sessions

COURSE SYLLABUS

Objectives

Participants will be taught the following:

- How to project lifestyle expenses for their retirement years.
- How to determine whether past savings combined with projected retirement income will allow for a comfortable retirement.
- Identify if the rate of return of their current portfolio will support their retirement plan.
- How to test the effect of large one-time lump sum **incomes** and **expenditures**.
- Method for evaluating psychological factors influencing their retirement decision.
- Ways to explore the suitability of various post-retirement opportunities.
- How to use the printout of their final financial retirement model to make decisions.

Action Steps

1. Participants assemble information on their benefits and send it in prior to workshop.
2. Information is processed and confidential personal reports are brought to workshop.
3. Analyze the psychological sub-text to the retirement decision.
4. Execute several "what if" financial projections to test alternatives.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Participants will achieve competence in the following:

- Recognizing the financial reality of their retirement years
- Identifying the psychological issues effecting their retirement decision
- Solid understanding of an investment strategy accompanied by an Investment Policy
- Understanding the estate planning issues and how to address them

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Spouse may attend at no extra cost.

Text: *To Be Determined*

Materials: Assorted publications by the Federal Reserve, Social Security, FHA, FTC, SEC, NAIC, etc. will be distributed. Also use of interest and annuity tables. Calculator required.

Grading: Certificate of completion will be issued

EXPERIENTIAL IN-DEPTH 2-HOUR SEMINARS

Presentations are designed with detailed, technically valid handout with which participants are guided to develop an understanding of the subject. **Experiential Seminar Fee:** \$820 **Maximum** Group Size: 30

- 1. Retirement Issues**
 - a. Whether retired or not, you'll learn about the variety of issues people encounter after retirement and how to avoid problems that could affect your lifestyle.
- 2. Estate Planning**
 - a. Do you really need a trust? A will may be just fine. If you feel you need to avoid probate, learn techniques available to you. Are your Power of Attorney documents up to date?
- 3. Social Security**
 - a. What claiming options are available? How are benefits taxed? Learn what survivor and retirement benefits are available to your family. Learn why you may want to collect early - or not.
- 4. Tools for an Introspective Look into Your Finances**
 - a. This interactive seminar focuses on how your use of time as well as current spending patterns influence your quality of life. Various in-class worksheets will help you focus on the right issues for a successful financial future. Previously titled: ***Financial Fusion***
- 5. Retirement Income Planning & Your 401K**
 - a. You'll be guided through a series of computations in class to determine if your current savings and the contributions in the future are in balance with your investment strategy to achieve your retirement lifestyle goals.
- 6. Finding a Financial Advisor You Can Trust**
 - a. Is your financial advisor working for you or the company he/she represents? You'll learn the difference between the Fiduciary Standard and the Suitability Standard. With 7 key questions, you can make sure your interests come first.
- 7. Understanding Annuities**
 - a. An in-depth examination of types of annuities without a sales pitch. Find out the advantages and disadvantages of each, as well as which type of annuity may be best suited for you.
- 8. Critical Investment Issues for your Roll-Over**
 - a. Learn how to avoid hidden fees that are costing you money. We'll discuss professional topics to improve investment performance like rebalancing, style drift, attribution, trading costs, etc. Previously titled: ***Investment Fees & Retirement Risks***
- 9. Self-Inflicted Investment Mistakes and How to Avoid Them**
 - a. Not sure if you are making the right choices when it comes to your investments? Our human nature is behind a lot of common mistakes that can seriously damage your portfolio's rate of return. Become aware of these mistakes so you can avoid them.
- 10. Learn How to Pay off Your Mortgage Earlier**
 - a. There are other ways to pay off your house earlier than just refinancing. Find out what your options are and also discuss techniques for managing your credit.

LUNCH-N-LEARN 45-MINUTE SEMINARS

Short seminars that rely on a PowerPoint presentation with handouts that cover all slides that are being presented.

Available topics are listed below. **Lecture Seminar Fee:** \$495

Maximum Group Size: 30

Personal Needs:

1. Survivor Needs
2. Educational Funding
3. Disability Income
4. Mortgage Acceleration
5. Family Coverage Review
6. Personal Financial Security Review
7. Financial Primer
8. Disaster Preparedness
9. Lesson in Life Insurance
10. Health Savings Accounts
11. Critical Illness Insurance

Retirement Needs:

12. Retirement Planning Review
13. Planning for Health Care Needs in Retirement
14. Role of Life Insurance in Retirement Planning
15. Retirement Income Protection
16. Lesson in Annuities (with variable products)
17. Lesson in Variable Annuities
18. Lesson in Fixed Interest and Indexed Annuities (without variable products)
19. Lesson in Indexed Annuities
20. Deferred Annuity Review (with variable products)
21. Deferred Fixed Interest and Indexed Annuity Review (without variable products)
22. Immediate Income Annuity Review (with variable products)
23. Immediate Fixed Income Annuity Review (without variable products)
24. Split Annuity Review
25. IRA Review
26. IRA Rollover
27. Planning for an IRA Owner's Death
28. Tax Deferred Annuity
29. Long-Term Care
30. Reverse Mortgages

Estate and Charitable Planning:

31. Estate Planning Considerations
32. Irrevocable Life Insurance Trusts
33. Planning for Children with Special Needs
34. A Lesson in Charitable Giving
35. A Charitable Trust Review
36. Charitable Gifts of Life Insurance

CYGNET INSTITUTE OF PERSONAL FINANCIAL LITERACY - PROFILE

Cygnnet Institute is a §501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization that specializes in promoting personal financial wellness. The Institute has been conducting workshops (in both corporate and public settings) that teach people how to make financial decisions to achieve their goals since 1989.

The Institute specializes in the design of workshops that use an experiential learning approach to engage participants in an interactive, self-completing process so they can learn how to make good decisions regarding their 401k, Retirement, Investing, Estate Planning, College Funding, Career Choices, and Managing Debt. With strict adherence to the Fiduciary Standard and application of critical thinking, program participants actually create their own plans along with related financial documents in class based on their personal information while maintaining absolute confidentiality.

The goal of the Institute is to teach individuals of all ages and various levels of financial knowledge a systematic process for building and implementing their personal financial plan. The Institute's experiential programs have been field tested and successfully implemented locally and nationally over the years by employers such as GM Powertrain, Amerisure, Walsh College, the GM-UAW Tuition Assistance Plan, Foundation Coal (Alpha Natural Resources), etc. Over the years employers have primarily used our programs to help employees with their 401k investment options. Quite often our programs are used to help individuals validate their decision to retire.

"We use an interactive, step-by-step approach so that participants can acquire or improve their skills as they work through a series of financial issues. This is enhanced by the knowledge that their information and plans will not be used to sell investments or insurance. In fact, our charter and new nonprofit status precludes presenters from soliciting workshop participants as clients.

Contact information:

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OAKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE - PROFILE

OCC provides a high quality, affordable higher education opportunity. With five campuses throughout Oakland County, OCC offers a caring environment, excellent instructors, smaller classes and educational options to meet our community's needs.

More than one million students have enrolled in the OCC since it opened in 1965. We look forward to serving the community for another 50 years and more!

LOWEST TUITION IN METRO DETROIT

An OCC degree costs less than 2 years at a state university.

MARKETABLE CAREER FIELDS

OCC offers over 100 programs in high demand fields such as it, healthcare and advanced manufacturing.

EASY TRANSFER

Nearly 50 percent of OCC students transfer to a four-year institution.

SMALL CLASS SIZES

Most classes at OCC have 25 students or less.

EXPERT FACULTY

Quality education taught by experts in their fields.

ACCREDITATION

OCC is fully accredited by the higher learning commission

TRANSFER PROFILE

Over 290 transfer agreements with 28 four-year institutions throughout the United States. Top transfer destinations include the following institutions:

- Oakland University
- Wayne State University
- Walsh College
- Eastern Michigan University
- Central Michigan University