Financial Literacy Workshops for New Americans

Lakewood Public Library

Adults

|

Intergenerational

|

Teens

Financial Literacy Workshops for New Americans

Mar 7, 2018

$251-500

$$
Byline

Andrea Fisher, Librarian, Lakewood (Ohio) Public Library

Lakewood has historically been a very welcoming place for new Americans. Our area recently saw an influx of new residents from Southeast Asia, so we decided to host a financial literacy class for Nepali and Burmese-speaking people.

We regularly work with a group called Asian Services in Action (ASIA Inc.), so we decided to reach out to them since they had the expertise needed for the workshops. We held the program at our Madison branch, which is located in a neighborhood where a lot of immigrants settle.

We hosted one workshop for Nepali speakers and one for Burmese speakers, and they were both very well attended. I was surprised at the wide range of attendees — people who were 18 years old, people who were in their 70s, men, women, everybody. It was wonderful to see a very specific population well-represented. The program was entirely in the native languages so I had no idea what they were saying, but their body language and eye contact said it all.

Advanced Planning

This program was offered as part of Thinking Money, a traveling exhibit about financial literacy offered by the ALA Public Programs Office and the FINRA Foundation. Our library was selected as one of 50 sites nationwide to host the exhibit, although this kind of program could definitely be done without the accompanying exhibit (which was in English).

After deciding to partner with ASIA Inc., I mostly had to trust that they knew our community’s needs, which they did. They planned the entire presentation and provided their own handouts covering topics like budgeting, credit and banking.

One thing I didn’t plan for: we had a photographer come to document the event, and we needed photo release forms in the participants' native languages. Luckily ASIA Inc. had forms in almost every language, so we could use theirs.

Marketing

We promoted the workshops within the library and made sure that all of our staff members were knowledgeable about them so they could promote it as well.

We promoted the workshops on social media and put the information in a local community newspaper, but I believe the most effective promotion was word of mouth spread by the library and ASIA Inc.

Budgeting

We received a $1,000 Thinking Money grant for a variety of finance-focused programming. We spent $256 of that money on both workshops. All of the $256 went to pay two interpreters for their time and mileage.

Day-of-event Activity

The workshops were held in September 2017 on two concurrent Wednesday evenings.

The library's role was mainly providing the space. The only thing we ended up doing on the day of was fumble around to get more chairs when an unexpected number of people showed up. The branch is really small, and we booked a smaller room for the workshops because a larger room was being used for Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

Program Execution

The participants were all really grateful, and we received a lot of good feedback from the staff at ASIA Inc. This was the most memorable and impactful of the Thinking Money programming we did, and we’re already considering doing something like it again.

Thirty-one people attended the Burmese workshop, and 25 attended the Nepali workshop, so next time I would get a bigger space. It was very cramped in the room.

Advice

Find a good community partner and think about groups in your community that are underserved. Working with other organizations will provide the sort of information and expertise you need for a program like this.

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images





Image









Image









Image









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Young Adult (17 - 20)+ | □□

Image



College & Me

Audiences:

Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
Jan 5, 2018
Teens (13-16)+ | $$
Image



Thinking Money Exhibit Kickoff and Coffeehouse

Audiences:

Teens (13-16)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
Feb 14, 2018
Children (9 and under)+ | □□
Image



Making Money Smart Students

Audiences:

Audience
Children (9 and under)
Teens (13-16)
Young Adult (17 - 20)