**Sample Financial Behavior Survey Questions**

The items below have been compiled for Smart investing@your library® participants seeking to develop questionnaires to measure behavioral outcomes related to their financial education programs (workshops, seminars, classes, and the like).[[1]](#footnote-1) Participants are welcome to use any subset of these questions, or to tailor the questions to align with the focus of their program offerings. The question bank is not meant to be exhaustive. The first section includes questions suitable for all adult audiences. Subsequent sections address more narrowly defined audiences: teens; 20-somethings; low-income parents; and senior citizens.

**Survey Instructions**

Below are statements about personal finance behavior. Please circle the number that best matches your desired choice. If a statement is not relevant for you, circle “not applicable.”

***Scale to be included with each question:***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| Very  unlikely | Somewhat unlikely | Unsure/ undecided | Somewhat likely | Very  likely | Not Applicable |

**General Questions**

1. I will track my income and expenses for three months in a row to be more aware of how I allocate my money.
2. I will set a financial goal that I hope to reach in five years.
3. I will write down both spending and saving goals that span one-to-three years.
4. Each month, I will save a portion of the money I earn or receive as gifts.
5. I will use the resources (onsite or online) of my public library to learn more about personal finances and financial planning.
6. I will check my credit report.
7. I will read every written contract or agreement before I sign my name to anything.
8. I will keep better financial records such as bills paid, important receipts, banking statements, and tax paperwork.
9. I will not reach the limit on my credit card or ask for a higher limit.
10. I will calculate the cost of charging a purchase on a credit card if I cannot pay it off when the bill arrives.
11. I will compare prices more often when I shop.
12. I will periodically compare plans and packages for phones, cable, internet, etc., to see if I can get a better deal.
13. I will comparison shop for any financial products or services that I might need, such as a bank account, brokerage account, credit card, mortgage, or auto loan.
14. I will discuss personal finance matters and financial planning with my family.
15. I will take steps to protect myself from identity theft.
16. I will open up or add to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or opt into or add to my employer’s retirement savings plan (such as a 401k), if it is available.
17. I will consider long-term investment options such as mutual funds, stocks, and/or bonds.
18. I will review or change my investment strategy by diversifying or shifting my asset allocation.
19. I will be more confident when making an investment decision.
20. I will be more confident about saving money for my retirement or other long-term goals.

**Target Audience: Teens**

1. For purchases that cost more than $25, I will compare prices and quality at three stores or internet sites before I buy them.
2. I will pack a lunch for school so that I can save any lunch money I receive.
3. I will save money for an investment in my future, such as education or training.
4. I will talk to my parent(s) about money management.
5. I will talk to my friends about budgeting or money management.
6. Before downloading a software program or an app, I will scan the user agreement to understand my privacy rights.
7. I will research possible jobs and careers to learn their education or training requirements and average salary.
8. I will track the money I spend on food, snacks, drinks, clothes, and entertainment for three months.
9. I will track my cell phone talk and text minutes each month and see if I am on the best plan for my usage.
10. I will stop buying things that I don’t need if I can’t afford them.

**Target Audience: 20-somethings**

1. I will research possible jobs and careers to learn more about job tasks, “in-demand” occupations, and wages/salaries for the jobs.
2. I will use a software program, app, or website to manage my personal finances.
3. I will not buy things that I cannot pay for right now or pay in full when the credit card bill arrives.
4. I will not use my credit card to pay for tuition, student fees, or course registration costs, and then pay it off over time.
5. I will not use my credit card to pay for a vacation and then pay it off over time.
6. I will research bank accounts and credit cards for the best options and lowest fees.
7. I will start a new saving plan by opting into one available through my employer (such as a 401k), if it is available.
8. I will estimate the total cost of car ownership, such as buying or leasing, taxes, insurance, gasoline, and maintenance.
9. I will track my cell phone talk and text minutes each month and see if I am on the best plan for my usage.
10. I will make sure that I have health insurance coverage.

**Target Audience: Low-Income Parents**

1. I will research whether I am eligible for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).
2. I will compare bank accounts and open a bank account for myself.
3. If my children do not have health insurance, I will enroll them in a health insurance program.
4. I will use the resources (onsite or online) of my public library to learn about free services in my community or state, for example food bank, tax preparation, or assistance with energy bills.
5. I will make sure I know the cost of financial services, such as loans or check-cashing.
6. I will help prepare my child/children for future jobs by teaching them about things such as paychecks, paycheck withholding, taxes, and insurance.
7. I will begin saving for a “rainy day fund” to be used in case of emergency.
8. I will set a good example for my children with my use of credit cards.
9. I will track my fixed expenses (such as rent, car payments) and my flexible expenses (such as utility bills, gasoline, clothing).
10. I will estimate whether the monthly expenses I have are more than or less than my monthly income.
11. I will try to decrease my expenses.
12. I will write down all of my debts, and then I will pay off at least one debt and try to reduce my other debts.
13. I will avoid late fees by paying my bills on time.
14. I will contact my creditors as soon as I intend to pay a bill late.
15. I will write down instructions and select a guardian for my child/children in case I become ill or in case of death.

**Target Audience: Senior Citizens**

1. I will read every written contract or agreement before I sign my name to anything.
2. I will not give out my financial information over the phone.
3. I will review my insurance policies to see if I want to make any changes.
4. I intend to make a legal, written will or review my will.
5. I will make a list of all my assets (things I own) and liabilities (debts and obligations) and use that to calculate my net worth.
6. I will make sure my investments are in reputable funds.
7. I will review my financial asset allocations among various stocks and stock funds, bonds and bond funds, real estate, etc., to insure a successful retirement.
8. I will consider buying generic drugs and prescriptions in order to cut down on costs.
9. I will write or review my advance directive that expresses my health care wishes in case I become seriously ill or unable to make my own health care decisions.
10. I will use the resources (onsite or online) of my public library to learn about free services in my community or state, for example tax preparation.

1. Special thanks to Deborah M. Figart, Ph.D., for preparing these questions. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)