

Treasurer's Note

April 1, 2024

Making It Easier for People to Save for the Future

They say that opposites attract. I can't say that my parents are complete opposites, but they definitely had different approaches to retirement.

My dad grew up on a dairy farm, which meant that he worked seven days a week, 365 days a year. He developed as strong a work ethic as I have ever seen, and he worked well into his 70s. He didn't have to work that long, but he enjoyed his job as a truck driver, and liked the people he worked with.

My mother is a natural caregiver. She worked really hard to give her sons a great life. But as soon as she had the opportunity to retire—and spend a lot more time with her first granddaughter—she took it. Not that she didn't want to spend more time with the grandsons who were born earlier, it just wasn't financially feasible at that time.

What both of my parents had in common is that they were able to make a choice about when they retired. Too many Americans work well into their 70s or 80s because they just can't afford to retire. I know too many of these people. They continue to work in childcare, healthcare, and physically demanding jobs that are hard on their bodies because Social Security alone does not provide enough for them to buy food and pay for housing.

This is why we set up the [Illinois Secure Choice](#) retirement savings program. I want to make it easier for people to save their own money so that they can choose when to retire. So that they can have a retirement with dignity.

As State Treasurer, I am always looking for ways to help people save for retirement. I also look for ways to encourage more people to [save for college](#) through the Bright Start 529 savings program. I think we have found a way to do both.

As I travel around the state, I hear lots of excuses for not saving for college. Among them: What if my kid doesn't go to college? What if my child receives a scholarship and doesn't need the money I have saved?

Now, parents have another option on [what to do](#) with leftover money in their college savings account.

In 2022, Congress passed legislation allowing up to \$35,000 in college savings plans to be rolled over into a Roth IRA.

We need a change in state law to help Illinois parents take advantage of this option. We are working with [Sen. Steve Stadelman](#) of the Rockford area and [Rep. Diane Blair-Sherlock](#) of Villa Park on legislation to do so. [Senate Bill 3133](#) and [House Bill 5005](#), which are working their way through the General Assembly, would allow unused dollars in a 529 account to be rolled over into an IRA.

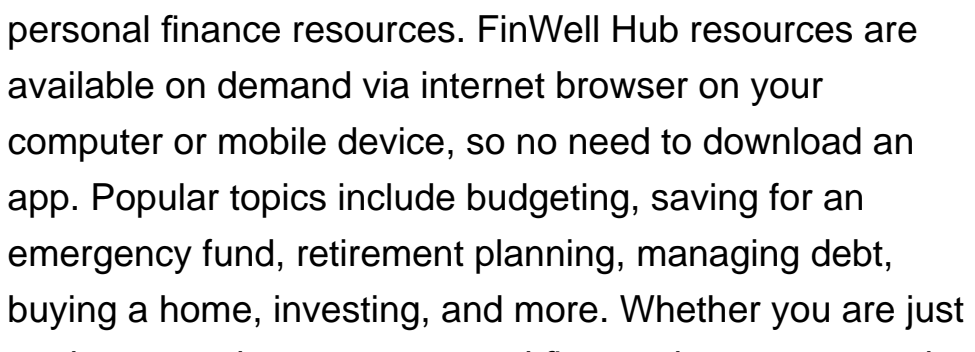
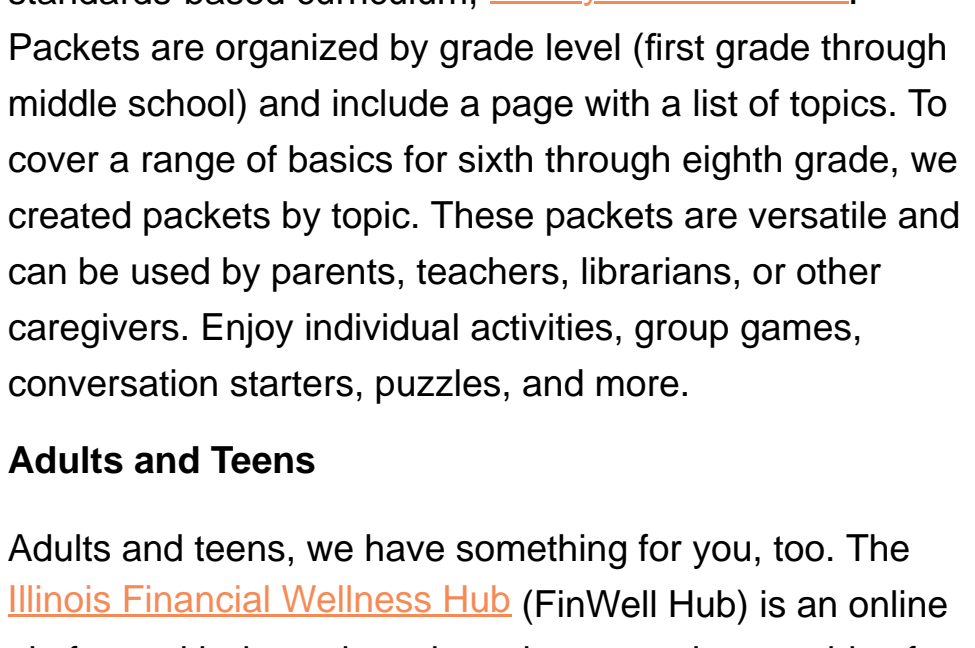
People will still need to save, but we can make it easier for them, and we can make it less expensive for them to do so with their state tax deductions. For many people, saving is still difficult, but when they are able, we stand ready to make it easier for them, and to make sure their dollars are stretched as far as possible.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Frerichs

Illinois State Treasurer

P.S. Last week, we held a news conference to promote the approval of the Roth IRA college savings rollover bill. We are thankful to Sen. Stadelman and Rep. Blair-Sherlock for shepherding the legislation and look forward to it becoming law. Here's a video recap of that event.



April Is Financial Literacy Month

Did you know? By age 3, kids can grasp basic money concepts. By age 7, many of their money habits are already set. Research shows when children acquire an early understanding about how to manage money, it pays back in dividends.

Financial literacy is a challenge for many Americans. Even the words can stress people out. We are hoping to change that. The Illinois State Treasurer's Office administers programs that focus on financial growth and empowerment. We have created [materials for the entire family](#). These tools can help communities build brighter financial futures.

Parents

Parents, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has a [reading list](#) for you and your child. The list labels books by age group and key ideas covered. Each book also comes with a parent reading guide to help you teach your child money management skills while reading.

Our office has created [activity packets](#) from content in our standards-based curriculum, [Money Minded Illinois](#). Packets are organized by grade level (first grade through middle school) and include a page with a list of topics. To cover a range of basics for sixth through eighth grade, we created packets by topic. These packets are versatile and can be used by parents, teachers, librarians, or other caregivers. Enjoy individual activities, group games, conversation starters, puzzles, and more.

Adults and Teens

Adults and teens, we have something for you, too. The [Illinois Financial Wellness Hub](#) (FinWell Hub) is an online platform with dynamic tools and courses that provides free personal finance resources. FinWell Hub resources are available on demand via internet browser on your computer or mobile device, so no need to download an app. Popular topics include budgeting, saving for an emergency fund, retirement planning, managing debt, buying a home, investing, and more. Whether you are just getting started on your personal finance journey or nearing the finish line, the FinWell Hub is here for you through it all. Create a free account today and tell your friends.

We hope these materials help you have engaging money conversations with your family during Financial Literacy Month and beyond. Happy learning!

Follow us on Social Media!

Illinois State Treasurer Michael W. Frerichs

1 East Old State Capitol Plaza

Springfield, IL 62701

WWW.ILLINOISTREASURER.GOV

[CONTACT PAGE](#)

Links to any third-party website do not constitute or imply an endorsement or referral. The Treasurer's Office is not responsible for the content or privacy practices of third-party websites.

To modify your e-mail options or opt out of receiving the Office of the Illinois State Treasurer's electronic communications, please [click here](#).

This e-mail has been sent to @illinoistreasurer.gov, [click here](#) to unsubscribe.