



## 2010 REAL Solutions Program - Illinois

REAL Solutions, a signature program of the National Credit Union Foundation, is being expanded in Illinois during 2010. The Illinois Credit Union League and the Illinois Credit Union Foundation have teamed up with the National Credit Union Foundation to bring you a program called, "REAL Solutions for Low Wealth Households." REAL Solutions stands for Relevant, Effective, Asset-building, Loyalty-producing Solutions, and is already working in twenty-seven states. Check out the REAL Solutions website ([www.realsolutions.coop](http://www.realsolutions.coop)) for additional information about the program.

The intent of the REAL Solutions program is to help credit unions grow by introducing a variety of products, services and programs that increase membership, deposits and loans. The key to the success of REAL Solutions is ensuring the products, services and programs operate on a break-even or better level. To provide these product, services and programs to the low-wealth community in the most effective manner and on an ongoing basis, credit unions must be able to sustain them.

Credit unions who want to learn more about serving the low-wealth community and to become a REAL Solutions Partner will have the opportunity to join the program. There is no cost to participate in the REAL Solutions Program or become a REAL Solutions Partner. The ICU Foundation brings the REAL Solutions Program to the credit unions of Illinois as part of its effort to reach the low wealth community.

The REAL Solutions program offers credit unions a way to migrate low wealth households into economic empowerment. Participating credit unions use business models, products and services that deliver the types of financial products underserved markets need, want and can afford, yet are sustainable by the credit unions. Implementing REAL Solutions could mean serving more members and potential members in markets that have seemed either risky or out of reach.

REAL Solutions Partner Credit Unions complete surveys and submit information to build a national information resource that can show how credit unions collectively serve the low-wealth community, a topic of interest to state and federal legislators.

Partners also have access to the online REAL Solutions Impact Center which contains information about programs, products and services for the low-wealth community as well as provides case studies of credit unions who have been successful in serving this market. In addition to the national benefits, REAL Solutions Partners from Illinois have access to an array of educational sessions, networking opportunities, information-sharing partner meetings, and an exclusive ListServ.

Flexibility is a central component of the REAL Solutions program. Credit unions can participate in as many or as few webinars and meetings as desired. Credit unions can offer as many or as few REAL Solutions programs, products or services as chosen. To be designated as a REAL Solutions Partner, credit unions must currently offer or be actively considering offering at least one REAL Solutions program, product or service and complete a memorandum-of-understanding (copy enclosed).

### **What's new in 2010?**

Recordings of webinars held during 2009 are available on the League's website to help credit unions become familiar with a variety of REAL Solutions programs, products and services. The recordings are available 24/7 so credit unions can listen at their convenience. See "REAL Solutions Recording Descriptions" for session descriptions and details on how to access the files.

Four REAL Solutions Partners Meetings will be held during 2010. The meetings will include information on a wide variety of REAL Solutions programs, products and services. Each meeting will highlight several REAL Solutions topics with special presentations. REAL Solutions Partner Credit Unions are strongly encouraged to participate in all of these meetings. There is no cost to attend the REAL Solutions Partner Meetings; pre-registration is required.



## REAL Solutions Partner Meetings

All REAL Solutions Partner Credit Unions are welcome to attend these sessions which are held at the ICU System Center in Naperville from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. There is no cost to attend Partner Meetings; pre-registration is required.

The format for the meetings will be similar to prior years, but with slight modifications. There will be a presentation on the highlighted topic, information sharing from REAL Solutions Partner CUs on current initiatives (including, but not limited to the highlighted topic), highlights from REAL Solutions CUs across the US, and a new Q&A session. During the Q&A, credit unions will present questions and current challenges to the group, then collectively, the participants will provide REAL Solutions to help answer the questions and solve the challenges.

### 2010 Meeting Schedule & Highlighted Topics

<b>Date</b>	<b>Highlighted Topics</b>
March 9 (Tuesday)	Youth Financial Education, Financial Counseling
June 9 (Wednesday)	VITA (Volunteer Tax Assistance Program), Refund Anticipation Alternatives
Sept. 15 (Wednesday)	Immigrant Outreach, Financial "Makeovers"
Nov. 16 (Tuesday)	FileOne Innovations, Plastic & Pre-Paid Cards

#### Sample Meeting Agenda

10:00 - 11:30	Highlighted Topic Presentations
11:30 - 12:15	RS Partner Updates & Sharing Session ( <u>ALL</u> RS Topics)
12:15 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 2:00	Q & A Session (Bring your questions & challenges on <u>ALL</u> RS Topics)
2:00 - 3:00	REAL Solutions National Update ( <u>ALL</u> RS Topics)

#### Registration

Contact Melanie Murphy via phone (800-942-7124) or email ([melanie.murphy@ilcusys.org](mailto:melanie.murphy@ilcusys.org)) at least one week prior to the meeting to register.

## Benefits for Illinois REAL Solutions Partner Credit Unions

### REAL Solutions Partner Meetings

All REAL Solutions Partner Credit Unions are encouraged to attend these sessions which are held at the ICU System Center in Naperville from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. There is no cost to attend Partner Meetings; pre-registration is required.

### REAL Solutions ListServ

All REAL Solutions Partner Credit Unions are eligible to participate in this online discussion group. ListServ members may post questions, request information, share success stories, and provide peer support on topics related to serving the low-wealth community.

### National REAL Solutions Resources

All REAL Solutions Partner Credit Unions can access the National Credit Union Foundation's Impact Center. It was created to highlight best practices in serving the low-wealth community and to collect information on how REAL Solutions programs, products and services have helped Americans.

## REAL Solutions Recording Descriptions

### Payday Alternative Loans (PALs) - Basics

- \* **The World of Payday Lending (40 min.)**
- \* **Overview of PAL Models (35 min.)**

Did you know there are more payday lending stores than McDonald's in Illinois? Credit unions are using payday lending alternatives in a variety of ways from a conservative, break-even product that is purely a money-saving option for members to a growth vehicle that competes head-to-head with the payday lenders in an attempt to put them out of business. This session will help you find out how your credit union can help members and expand your membership base.

### PALs - Advanced (1 hr. 15 min.)

This session explores a variety of payday lending alternative programs including StretchPay, a popular program started by credit unions in Ohio which offers participants a pre-designed program with specific parameters and a loan-loss reserve fund to alleviate risk concerns. The Good Money program from Prospera CU which can be used as a turn-key or a custom program. A credit union who has a payday lending alternative in place round out the information-packed session.

### Building Partnerships (1 hr. 5 min.)

The key to successful REAL Solutions programs, products and services is building partnerships. Partnerships with community groups, schools, non-profit organizations, local legislators, libraries, park districts, and others result in returns-on-investments many times over. Learn how to build strategic partnerships that are mutually beneficial to your credit union and the partner organization.

### Youth Financial Education

- \* **Establishing In-School Branches (40 min.)**
- \* **Biz Kid\$ Educational Materials (40 min.)**
- \* **CU4Reality Program (20 min.)**
- \* **Mad City Money Program (13 min.)**

Learn how to establish an in-school branch and where in-school branches work most effectively--high schools, middle schools, elementary schools. Find out how your credit union can help schools teach young people money management or participate in a "reality fair" where students get a taste of the real world. Discover how to help schools teach kids about money using an innovative educational PBS television show called "Biz Kid\$."

### VITA Program (20 min.)

The U.S. Government has billions of dollars to return to working people that don't earn high wages, yet thousands of Illinois families don't receive it. Even more people are eligible for free tax-preparation services, but instead pay to have their returns completed and pay hefty fees for Refund Anticipation Loans. Your CU can help by learning about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Programs. Your efforts to educate working families about these powerful tax benefits will put money back into their pockets and give credit unions an opportunity to do what they do best--help people.

### Second Chance Checking Accounts (20 min.)

Learn how several credit unions are using second-chance checking accounts to help their members return to mainstream transactional accounts.

### Predatory Auto Loans (20 min.)

An important strategy for strengthening economic mobility and the economy is to ensure workers with low wages and/or low credit scores are able to purchase reliable, affordable cars. Discover the opportunity non-prime auto loans represent for credit unions to expand their markets, build net income and attract new loyal members by giving them a substantially better deal.

### Immigrant Outreach Basics (23 min.)

Find out how your CU can identify the immigrant groups in your field of membership and determine the most effective ways to reach these potential new members. Discover how your CU can grow by providing essential financial products and services to these growing markets. Simply translating materials into other languages is not the most effective way to expand -- hear the best methods successful credit unions use to integrate a new market segment with their current membership base.

### Immigrant Outreach Advanced (35 min.)

Learn about the Hispanic Opportunity Navigator, which provides CUs with a personalized analysis regarding readiness to expand into the Hispanic community and step-by-step recommendations to successfully implement a program to reach this young, growing market.

To access files go to [www.iculeague.org/leagueservices/realsol.htm](http://www.iculeague.org/leagueservices/realsol.htm)

## What are the next steps?

### **Credit Unions that are unsure and need more information**

- 1) Listen to the "Introduction to REAL Solutions" recording; share it with your board of directors
- 2) Decide if REAL Solutions programs, products and services are suitable for your CU
- 3) Select programs, products and services of interest and participate in appropriate recordings
- 4) Choose programs, products and services to pursue further; register and attend RS meetings
- 5) Sign Memorandum of Understanding (enclosed) to become an official "REAL Solutions Partner CU"
- 6) Attend partner meetings & share experiences

### **Credit Unions that want to get involved**

- 1) Select programs, products and services of interest and participate in appropriate recordings
- 2) Choose programs, products and services to pursue further; register and attend RS Meetings
- 3) Sign Memorandum of Understanding (enclosed) to become an official "REAL Solutions Partner CU"
- 4) Attend partner meetings & share experiences

### **Credit Unions that currently offer at least one REAL Solutions program, product or service**

- 1) Sign Memorandum of Understanding (enclosed) to become an official "REAL Solutions Partner CU"
- 2) Attend partner meetings & share experiences

### **Current REAL Solutions Partner Credit Unions**

- 1) Attend partner meetings & share experiences

## Questions?

Contact Vicki Ponzo or Melanie Murphy at the Illinois Credit Union League (800-942-7124).