

MTA Deferred Compensation Program—2021 NAGDCA Leadership Recognition Awards—National Retirement Security Month

The exhilarating pace of New York City and its surrounding regions is an experience like no other. Crowds moving through the busy streets of Manhattan, the energy in New York moves at a fast pace, over bridges, through tunnels, the humming of buses, rolling wheels of subway cars on tracks, the hustle and bustle of the people, 24-7, make the greater NYC area one of the most lively places in the world. Then, suddenly, last March, that all changed when COVID-19 plagued the country.

Project summary

As a global pandemic set in, MTA essential workers experienced a drastic change in the way they worked and lived. Additionally, COVID-19 caused many to think about their expectations and to reflect on their Financial Future.

Using the Fall's National Retirement Security Month (NRSM) as a platform to educate, enroll and engage employees, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) partnering with Prudential Retirement, developed and rolled out a creatively themed virtual "Financial Wellness Challenge 2020".

Since NRSM is a dedicated time to focus on improving employee retirement outcomes, this was an ideal platform for the employees at North America's largest transportation network, that carried a population of 15.3 million people across a 5,000-square-mile travel area surrounding New York City through Long Island, southeastern New York State, and Connecticut. The MTA network comprises the nation's largest bus fleet and more subway and commuter rail cars than all other U.S. transit systems combined. The MTA's operating agencies are New York City Transit, MTA Bus, Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North Railroad, Staten Island Railway, MTA Headquarters, and MTA Bridges and Tunnels.

Capturing employees' attention and offering education during this time of masks and social distancing led to utilizing a virtual "contactless" approach. For these employees, it was something very new. The goal was to help them understand the connection between a relevant Financial Wellness plan and the correlation of building for a secure retirement. The campaign had to offer a powerful action-based program that would be motivating, relatable and achievable.

Implementation

The year 2020 was not typical. In March, a global pandemic brought an entirely new approach to personal interactions. In constructing the Financial Wellness Challenge 2020 that would coincide with NRSM, the strategy included:

- Tailored emails that related to best suit participants by age
- A mailer to connect to the employees that were not utilizing the Program
- Online activities that utilized technology to virtually meet, watch, replay, question and share screens

Results

- October measured close to 300 new enrollments in 4 weeks, a 30% increase from the prior month.
- Over 2,300 increases; 313 explored Financial Wellness tools, with over 200 Financial Wellness assessments completed.
- One on ones conducted by the dedicated Counseling team exceeded 850.
- Email open rates surpassed 25%.

These initiatives focused on moving MTA employees to take meaningful actions for their retirement and overall financial wellness. We are encouraged with the efforts and the results achieved by our employees and hope you agree. Thank you for considering The **MTA Deferred Compensation Program** for a NAGDCA 2021 Leadership Award for **National Retirement Security Month**.

Sincerely,

Kim Russell, Director – Tax Favored Programs
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Summary

1)Plan profile – type(s) of plans offered, asset size, number of participants, industry partner(s), etc.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority, (MTA), offers employees the opportunity to enroll in the MTA Deferred Compensation Program (457 and 401(k) Plans) as soon as they become an employee. As of 12/31/2020, 74,617 participants are enrolled in the Program that has over \$8.2 Billion in assets.

2)Background information – details about the need/problem that the project was designed to meet/solve for

The MTA employer workforce is unique in that they work in various areas, many in a fast-paced environment moving passengers throughout North America's largest transportation network. They are limited to when and how they are able to learn more about the MTA Deferred Compensation Program, as well as the Financial Wellness tools the Program makes available to them.

Prior to Covid-19 the dedicated Prudential Retirement Counseling team of 8 (including a manager) traveled to the 140+ locations for both group meetings and one on one sessions throughout the year. These locations included Bus Depots, Subway Stations, LIRR and Metro North Commuter Railroads, Bridges and Tunnels, Staten Island Railway, MTA Police Districts and MTA Headquarters.

3)Goals – brief overview of the intended outcomes

The purpose and goal of the campaign was to celebrate National Retirement Security Month and use it as a platform to promote the MTA Deferred Compensation Program through a multi-touch, Financial Wellness themed strategy as follows:

- Introduce an MTA Deferred Compensation Program “Financial Wellness Boot Camp Workshop” (Live Webinars and on demand playback)
- Send MTA Deferred Compensation Program Emails to:
 - Kick off National Retirement Security Month
 - Promote the Wellness Boot Camp Webinar Workshop educational learning experience
 - Reiterate the goals of National Retirement Security Month by showing how increasing contributions can dramatically impact savings
 - Encourage personalized follow-up one on one virtual appointments with the Counseling Team
- Additionally, a postcard was mailed to non-participants to remind them of the benefit they are not using to encourage them to learn more by connecting with the dedicated team

4)In their own words – brief quote (one to two sentences) from plan sponsor(s) or other staff justifying why the nomination deserves an award

“The MTA is very focused on educating our employees about the benefits of the Deferred Compensation Program. Through our partnership with Prudential and the dedicated team of Counselors, we are able to continually promote and encourage employees to learn more and fully utilize the Deferred Compensation Program benefit. We traditionally held these events in person, and in 2020 the ability to modify and provide the program virtually due to the Pandemic allowed us to deliver that objective. ”

Kim Russell, Director – Tax Favored Programs
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

1) Written justification Detailed description of the project – timeline, significance of the improvement to the operation of the plan, examples (e.g., images, screenshots, etc.) The MTA Deferred Compensation Program offers employees a 401(k) Plan and a 457 Plan. We developed a Financial Wellness campaign that targeted all MTA employees; it was comprised of a series of emails, a mailer for those that were not in the program, a calendar of live webinars where a Financial Wellness Boot Camp Program was offered (that was also recorded), and a Financial Wellness Boot Camp checklist that encouraged employees to set up virtual follow-up appointments for personalized conversations after they attended the Boot Camp Workshop.

Using a “Get your financial future into shape!” theme, the program deployed a series of emails to kick off National Retirement Security Month; an email that targeted participants by age, one that reminding them of the Boot Camp workshop as well as a final email to encourage a virtual meeting with their dedicated counseling team.

A “Financial Wellness Challenge 2020” logo branded the campaign and was included on all materials with the intent on: Focusing on getting your financial future into shape, flexing to a stronger financial future all with a mindset to train participants to manage their money better, improve their spending habits, grow their savings and protect their savings.

Additionally the Financial Wellness Boot Camp was designed as a fast paced session, delivered in under 20 minutes, it showed participants and employees:

- The MTA Deferred Compensation Program’s educational website is a resource for information
- How to register their account, update beneficiary, and sign up for e delivery
- The new Prudential App features and how to use it
- The bulk of the presentation explored the Financial Wellness tools to help participants improve financial health that focused on the need for an “Ongoing Financial Strength Plan”. Similar to any fitness plan, it isn’t about the first workout, but what is done regularly in the days and weeks that follow that delivers true progress. We identified the steps:

Step 1: Take the Financial Wellness Assessment to find your starting place and determine your next steps

Step 2: Customize your workout plan

- Keep track of your money: Create and track a budget that factors in your MTA Deferred Compensation Program and external accounts
- Debt manager tool: Get help strategizing and paying down debt
- Spend vs. invest: Find small ways to save more over time
- Retirement Income Calculator: Know what you’ll need and find ways to close existing gaps
- Meet one on one with a counselor: Get customized guidance for free

In addition, a Financial Wellness Boot Camp Checklist, corresponded with an interval training approach—break outs of focused activity alternated with intervals of lighter actions to steadily improve financial wellness over time.

We offered a live webinar with the ability to allow employees watch an on-demand playback to accommodate their busy schedules. The majority of materials were electronic; emails, PDFs and ON24 presentations, website promotion banner and an “MTA Today” intranet article. The only printed piece was the mailer that was sent to employees that were not in the plan, and this was mailed since we did not have access to any emails for this audience.

2)Results – key outcomes and measurable benefits (i.e., KPIs)

The success of this campaign can be measured by attendance, actions taken and increased engagement. In this case, the campaign generated close to 300 new enrollments in 4 weeks, and that was a 30% increase from the prior month. The Financial Wellness Challenge 2020 also measured over 2,300 increases during the campaign. We saw 313 employees go out and explore the Financial Wellness tools right after attending the Boot Camp or receiving an email. And this group completed over 200 Financial Wellness assessments. In total, 857 one on ones were conducted by the dedicated Counseling team and this included employees setting up appointments where the Counselors shared their screen and assisted them in navigating tools in their account as well as phone conversations. As an added bonus the one on one consultations produced 61 opportunities for rollovers for participants looking to consolidate their retirement savings. Another indicator of the success of the program was evidenced by email open rates for the 4 emails sent. The first email saw a 28% open rate. The second email targeted by age measured 26% (under 35), 29% (35-50) and 27% (50+) open rates. The third email measured a 25% open rate and the final email which encouraged participants to reach out to the counselor received the highest open rate of 32%. The day this email was sent, counselors were booked with appointments and interest to set up sessions for weeks afterwards.

This data, reflecting employees who acted during and after the events, demonstrates the effectiveness of the clearly presented and engaging communications and the hard work of the dedicated Counseling Team to educate MTA employees with the goal of motivating them to achieving a better financial future.

3) Feasibility of use by other governments of a similar size

The nature of the campaign makes is very feasible for other governmental clients; not only from a geographic standpoint but from a workforce perspective where employees may not have the time or the capability to travel to and attend a live event at one designated location. Since these events are not currently being offered on site (in person), this type of program will allow many more government employees to experience robust education and interaction regarding their sponsored retirement plan.

Financial Wellness Checklist ►

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Planning for your Financial Future has never been so important.

Financial Wellness Boot Camp Checklist
Use this interval training approach—break outs of focused activity alternated with intervals of lighter actions to steadily improve your financial wellness over time.

BASIC TRAINING
Find your starting point and utilize the tools you have available.

- Evaluate and set your financial goals to better prepare your plan for success.
Example goal: Contribute for the future by joining or increasing contributions to the MTA Deferred Compensation Program.

Key areas of focus:

- How are you managing day-to-day finances?
- Are you on track to achieve long-term goals?
- Are you prepared for emergencies?

- Complete an assessment - logging into your account at www.prudential.com/mta, go to the Financial Wellness tab, then the Tools section to see how well you're spending, planning and protecting your money and assets, and get tips to do better.
- Set up an individual meeting with an MTA Retirement Education Counselor by phone or in a virtual web appointment. Our Retirement Counselors will evaluate your specific situation, answer your questions and provide personalized one-on-one assistance tailored for you. There is no charge for their service that is provided compliments of MTA.

EVALUATE FOR YOU

Are you?	Why you should consider...
<input type="checkbox"/> Participating in the MTA Deferred Compensation Program	Prepare yourself for a better financial future
<input type="checkbox"/> Able to increase your savings amount (e.g. double your catch-up feature (Available to those age 50 or over))	Increases can dramatically impact your account balance
<input type="checkbox"/> If you started late saving for retirement or need to rebuild retirement savings in your 50s, this may make a significant difference in your savings efforts	
<input type="checkbox"/> It can help to maximize returns by investing in different funds that react differently to the same event. This does not guarantee (gains or losses) against loss, but managing risk and diversification are an important components.	
<input type="checkbox"/> If you are ever faced with an unexpected life event, you will have something saved.	
<input type="checkbox"/> If you do not use all of the funds in your account before you die, you want to decide who will receive the money to avoid probate. Having a beneficiary makes things easier for your loved ones.	

RESULTS
It will help you:
• Gain knowledge
• Plan your Financial Future
• Live well



As we continue celebrating **National Retirement Security Month** during October, we encourage you to take this time to learn more about the MTA Deferred Compensation Program—a benefit that you're currently not using.

A few advantages to consider:

- It can help supplement your paycheck, pension, and Social Security
- It enables your money to accumulate and grow tax-free until withdrawal
- It's a vehicle you may also use to defer unused vacation pay

WANT TO LEARN MORE?



Set up a free session with a retirement counselor and have your questions answered.

TO SCHEDULE YOUR ONE-ON-ONE APPOINTMENT:

- Go to www.prudential.com/mta, then click on the "Personal Assistance" tab and use the yellow "schedule an appointment" button.
- You can also email or call a counselor directly. The counselors are listed by the locations they typically covered prior to the pandemic; however, you may contact any one of them for assistance.

FINANCIAL WELLNESS BOOT CAMP WORKSHOP



Be sure to catch a replay of our free, fast (only 20 minutes) training session to help improve your retirement future. (Available regardless of your employment status.)



Scan to
and watch now!

LOOKING FOR A WAY TO STRENGTHEN YOUR RETIREMENT SAVINGS?

Consider the MTA Deferred Compensation Program!

◀ Mailer to non-participants



Get your financial future into shape!

October is National Retirement Security Month! Whether you're a long-time employee or just getting started, this is a great opportunity to focus on your Financial Wellness—and your retirement.

Take advantage of the tools and resources available in our Deferred Compensation Program.

Get training on how to:

- Manage your money better
- Improve your spending habits
- Grow your savings (compound interest)
- Protect your savings



Join one of our free, fast, (just 20 minutes) training sessions and improve your retirement future

(Available regardless of your employment status.)

Register now

Targeted emails ▼



Flex into a strong financial future!

Save for retirement sooner rather than later, because your Deferred Compensation Program can work harder for you over time.

Here's the power of compound interest

Michael and Deion are both 25, earn a similar income, and contribute the same amount per pay period. However, Deion doesn't start saving until he's 40.

Starting age	Total at 65 ¹
Maximum amount starting at age 25	\$1,197,810
Minimum amount starting at age 40	\$373,494

Starting sooner helped Michael save over a million dollars.

Financial wellness boot camp

Take advantage of National Retirement Security Month by taking advantage of the tools and resources offered through your plan.

Get training on how to:

- Manage your money better
- Improve your spending habits
- Grow your savings (compound interest)
- Protect your savings



Join one of our free, fast (just 20 minutes) training sessions and improve your retirement future

(Available regardless of your employment status.)

Register now



Ride on into a smoother financial future!

Achieving a more secure retirement comes down to one thing. Saving!

Simply increasing your deferral amount can make all the difference.

Michael and Deion are both 35, earn a similar income, and contribute around \$85 each pay period. However, Deion increases his deferral amount by just 1% each year until reaching 15%.

Name	Contribution increase	Total at 65 ¹
Michael	No increase	\$294,248
Deion	1% increase annually until reaching 15%	\$433,141

This small step toward your savings can have a bigger impact on your retirement than you think!

Financial wellness boot camp

Celebrate National Retirement Security Month by taking advantage of the tools and resources offered through your plan.

Get training on how to:

- Manage your money better
- Improve your spending habits
- Grow your savings (compound interest)
- Protect your savings



Join one of our free, fast (just 20 minutes) training sessions and improve your retirement future

(Available regardless of your employment status.)

Register now



◀ Boot Camp Workshop

<https://event.on24.com/eventRegistration/EventLobbyServlet?target=reg20.jsp&referrer=http%3A%2F%2Ffmta.retirepru.com%2F&eventid=2749560&sessionid=1&key=69D9BFC6CE935C084DD693D62C96D299®Tag=&V2=false&sourcepage=register>

To watch the brief playback recording: click on the link and submit an email address, name, and zip code.