



SHARON R. BOCK
Clerk & Comptroller
Palm Beach County

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Harvard University Honors Clerk & Comptroller's Summer Financial Literacy Program as a Bright Idea in Government

-- Ash Center Recognizes Government Excellence, Service Improvements & Problem Solving in Communities;

Clerk's Program Fosters Public Service, Financial Understanding & Job Readiness --

Palm Beach County, FL (March 21, 2017) – The Clerk & Comptroller, Palm Beach County's Summer Financial Literacy Program was recognized by Harvard University's Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government as a 2017 Innovations in American Government Awards' Bright Ideas. The Bright Ideas program highlights and promotes creative government initiatives and partnerships so that government leaders, public servants, and other individuals can learn about noteworthy initiatives that they can adopt in their own communities.

"The Bright Ideas program demonstrates that there are no prerequisites for doing the good work of governing," said Stephen Goldsmith, director of the Innovations in American Government Program at the Ash Center. "Small towns and massive cities, huge federal agencies and local school districts, large budgets or no budgets at all — what makes government work best is the drive to do better, and this group proves that drive can be found anywhere."

The Clerk's Summer Financial Literacy Work Experience program represents innovative government work that improves services, solves problems, and works on behalf of the people.

"When teens are exposed to good government and empowered with financial knowledge, they get a jump start on adulthood. Our hands-on program empowers students to be informed citizens and

teaches valuable life and career skills,” said Clerk Sharon R. Bock. “I’m honored that our summer financial literacy program was recognized for its innovation and will serve as a model for other organizations nationwide.”

The Clerk & Comptroller’s high school student program was developed in 2012 by Shannon Ramsey Chessman, chief operating officer of finance, as a way to provide students with exposure to the world of public and personal finance, public service, and job readiness. Over 65 Suncoast High School students have participated in the internship program since its inception.

Students participating in the Clerk’s Summer Financial Literacy Work Experience receive an overview of the county Clerk & Comptroller’s office and hands-on experiences in government, personal finance, professional development, information technology, and the justice system. While learning about the critical role finance plays throughout the organization, students are exposed to a variety of departmental functions. Students work collectively for portions of the program before breaking into small groups, or “pods,” for more granular experiences. Each pod rotates through the finance department, providing valuable, hands-on training.

“Without [the program] I’d probably still be struggling to find my first job but I am so happy to have had the opportunity to participate and have such great speakers teach me so much,” said Marvin Leveille, former intern.

Student recruitment at Suncoast High School begins in March, and by May, the itinerary is set and students are notified of acceptance to the program. The program runs for 12 business days. At the conclusion, students receive 72 credits towards community service hours as well as transferrable knowledge and life skills concerning finance and the public sector.

This and other Bright Ideas are showcased on the Ash Center’s Government Innovators Network, an online platform for practitioners and policymakers to share innovative public policy solutions.

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About the Clerk & Comptroller, Palm Beach County

The Florida Constitution established the independent office of the Clerk & Comptroller as a public trustee, responsible for safeguarding public records and public funds. Clerk Sharon Bock is directly elected by and accountable to Palm Beach County residents. In addition to the roles of Clerk of the Circuit Court, County Recorder and Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, the Clerk & Comptroller is the Chief Financial Officer, Treasurer and Auditor for Palm Beach County.

About Harvard University's Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation

The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation advances excellence in governance and strengthens democratic institutions worldwide. Through its research, education, international programs, and government innovations awards, the Center fosters creative and effective government problem solving and serves as a catalyst for addressing many of the most pressing needs of the world's citizens. For more information, visit <http://www.ash.harvard.edu/>.



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