

Program Overview

JA Finance Park gives middle and high school grade students an opportunity to develop personal money management skills, acquire personal finance knowledge and prepare for financial decisions and challenges in their adult lives.

JA Finance Park introduces students to personal finance and career explorations through classroom instruction complemented by a simulation experience where students apply learned concepts in a real world environment. During this interactive simulation, students assume family and income scenarios and gather information for their personal financial decision-making. They use bank services; contribute to charities; purchase housing, transportation, furnishings, food, health care, and manage other expenses; and make investment decisions, while working to balance their budgets.

Curriculum

13 lessons taught by the classroom teacher

Unit One: Financial Institutions

Students recognize the role of financial institutions and the various services they provide. Through case study, graphing and other activities, students understand the advantages and disadvantages of saving, investing and using credit.

Unit Two: Taxes and My Salary

Students discuss the similarities and differences among sales, income and property taxes. Students study the benefits and limitations of Social Security. Using various scenarios, students determine net monthly income (NMI).

Unit Three: Budgeting

Students learn the importance of creating and maintaining a personal budget. Students create their own personal budgets and evaluate other budgets through case study analysis.

Unit Four: Preparing for the JA Finance Park

Students prepare for their simulation by defining their schedule, conducting pricing research and assessing investment. They also gain knowledge about budgeting by evaluating hypothetical life situations and prioritizing budget items.

Unit Five: The Simulation

Students participate in the JA Finance Park simulation, where they apply classroom learning by making important spending decisions and maintaining a balanced budget.

Unit Six: After the Simulation

Students participate in a reflective assessment of their accomplishments during their JA Finance Park experience that includes feedback from parents.

Unit Seven: Career Goals

Students identify their abilities, interests, work preferences and values. Based on their newly acquired financial knowledge, students consider the type of lifestyle they would like and what goals they must set to achieve this lifestyle. Students determine the training they will need to achieve these goals.

The Simulation

Schools choose one of two interactive and engaging delivery models for the JA Finance Park Program

Online Simulation: 1-2 hour online simulation is held at school, assisted by teachers and volunteers.

Onsite Simulation: 4.5 hours onsite simulation at Junior Achievement's capstone facility in Maplewood, is led by JA staff, assisted by teachers & adult volunteers.

During the simulation, students learn their unique life situation and calculate their net monthly income and budget guidelines. Using their calculations, students make budget decisions in 18 key budget areas and work to develop a balanced monthly budget. In addition, students receive an investment portfolio and track the value of their investments throughout the simulation.

JA Finance Park is open to any school in Minnesota, North Dakota and Western Wisconsin. To learn more or to sign-up a school for this program, visit www.jaum.org or call 651-255-0055.