



JA Finance Park®

Volunteer Quickstart Guide

Paperless Simulation

Curriculum made possible by:



Volunteer Overview and Expectations

Welcome! Thank you for joining us at JA Finance Park for what promises to be an exciting learning experience. For several class periods, students have been learning about financial institutions, careers, taxes, budgeting, credit, and more. JA Finance Park, the simulation, gives students a hands-on opportunity to put this learning into action.

Before students arrive at JA Finance Park, a JA Staff member will conduct a volunteer training to review the day's procedures and instructions. Don't hesitate to ask questions during training or during the simulation day. We are here to help you, which in turn, will help students have a more successful and enjoyable day.

Your role today is to be a group facilitator and student mentor, working with 6 to 10 students, at your assigned group table. During the day, your group of students will work through the initial Set-Up, Research, Budget, Shopping, and Payment time periods where specific activities will take place.

Thank you for assisting the students. Without volunteers, this program could not successfully operate. Remember to ask as many questions as necessary during the volunteer training. We want this to be the best day possible for you and your students.

Volunteers

- Provide guidance and assistance to students.
- Facilitate scheduled group discussions.
- Monitor and verify students' work progress.
- See that a JA Finance Park tablet is signed out to each student and collected at the end of the day.

- Please wear your nametag.
- Food and drinks must remain in the snack/dining area.
- At the end of the day, please leave this Volunteer Guide on the table.
- Please remain in the JA Finance Park space until after student departure.

Students

- Students must remain inside the Park area for the entire day.
- All food and drink must remain in the snack/dining area during lunch.
- No gum or candy is allowed in JA Finance Park.
- Students must consider their assigned family when making all budget and shopping decisions.

Important Information

- Evacuation routes are posted on the wall.
- Questions or concerns you aren't equipped to answer should be referred to a JA Finance Park Staff member.

The Paperless Simulation – Volunteer Checklist

- (15 minutes) Welcome/Opening**
___ Students gather for a career presentation and overview of the day.
___ Students disperse into small groups and join their assigned adult volunteer.
___ Students and volunteer make brief introductions.
- (40 minutes) Set-Up and Savings – At your home base.....Page 4**
___ Volunteers sign-out a tablet to each student and assign them an account number and associated PIN number.
___ Students login to the tablet software and answer six lifestyle questions about their plans/hopes for their financial future.
___ Volunteers lead a discussion in which students share highlights of their assigned persona – including income, job title and education background, marital status, if they have children, existing savings and debt, and their credit score.
___ Students calculate their NMI and their household total NMI.
___ Volunteers lead a discussion on saving and students decide what they will set as a monthly savings goal. They then allocate that savings to three saving funds.
- (50 minutes) Research – In the Park.....Pages 5-9**
___ Volunteers bring their students to a starting business to begin research. Rotating clockwise about every 3-6 minutes.
___ Students bring their tablets and visit each business to read and discuss information for that budget category.
___ Remind students to apply for the following loans while in the Park: bank-mortgage, bank-auto loan (if applicable), transportation loan.
___ Utilizing discussion questions, volunteers initiate group discussion with students about their research discoveries and share personal experience and suggestions about budgeting.
- (50 minutes) Budget and Lunch Break – At your home base**
___ Students build a monthly budget on their tablet, informed by their research and volunteer discussion.
___ Students must allocate 100% of their household NMI during this phase and record their budget plan in the software.
- (45 minutes) Shopping – At your home base.....Page 10**
___ Students make all shopping selections on their tablets at their home base.
___ Students discover how close they came to budgeting accurately, based on their wants and needs. They may spend more in a category than they budgeted, but overall they may NOT spend more than their income, nor may they dip into existing savings.
- (35 minutes) Payment – In the Park.....Page 11**
___ Students pay for all their shopping selections.
NOTE: Some items are paid for with a debit card (groceries, gas and maintenance for their car(s), entertainment, etc.) and other items are paid electronically by making an online payment from their banking account.
- (15 minutes) Debrief.....Page 12**
___ Students receive a final report that details their life scenario and decisions.
___ Volunteers collect all tablets and have students back sign in.
___ Volunteer debriefs the student experience with guided questions.
___ JA Staff leads a group debrief prior to student dismissal.

Savings Strategy Talking Points

Many experts recommend that individuals save at least 10% each month. Saving – paying yourself first – helps keep your priorities in order and helps assure your financial security.

Optional questions you might ask:

Do you think it would be easy to set aside this amount?

Do you think having a saving goal or goals would make it easier to save?

How much do you want to plan on saving this month?

Whatever you save each month, the total is divided into multiple things you are saving for.

Let's talk about how you may want to divide your savings into these categories.

Emergency Funds Talking Points

Many financial experts recommend having 3 to 6 months of income in savings for emergencies. Emergency funds assist families in the event of income loss due to loss of employment, a major medical emergency, etc.

What other reasons might a family need emergency funds for?

Does anyone have 3 months of savings in their emergency fund in today's simulation?

The answer is no –students will not have this much in their savings.

Retirement Savings Talking Points

Share with students that time is on their side. Saving even a little each month will mean growth of their money 30, 40, or more years down the road.

Do you remember from your discussions in class what three things are key to growing savings in the long-term?

The amount of money you save, the interest rate, and time.

Other Savings Talking Points

Do you think you want to own a home someday?

Do you know how much lenders typically want for a down payment, before approving a home loan?

20% down is the standard.

Do you know how to estimate how much house you can afford?

Many financial experts recommend spending no more than three (3) times your annual income on a home. To determine what price you can pay for a home multiply your NMI times 36 (3 years = 36 months).

What are other things that you would like to save for?

Vacation, boat, technology, etc.

Research Path and Discussion Questions

- Volunteers and students rotate from business to business, clockwise, around the Park unlocking and learning about each of the businesses. JA Staff will do periodic time announcements letting you know how many businesses you should have completed.
- Approximate time for each budget line item is 2 – 2 ½ minutes (or 4-5 minutes per business/storefront grouping that may contain 2-3 budget items).

Insurance Unlock Code: XXX

- Students will choose between legal minimum coverage and full coverage. **Discuss** some of the high level differences and risks associated with minimum coverages.
- **Ask** students what they think is the risk of not having insurance. Do they think minimum legal requirements are enough?

Bank: Auto Loan Unlock Code: XXX

- This is a second application for purchasing a car. Even if students want to take public transportation they must apply for a car loan.
- **Remind students to tap the green APPLY FOR LOAN button on the research screen, tap to fill and then tap SUBMIT!**

Bank: Mortgage Loan Unlock Code: XXX

- All students must complete a mortgage application. Factors that determine if your mortgage application is approved include your credit score and the amount you have in savings. (A person with a great score could be denied a mortgage because they can't make a down payment on the house they want to buy).

NOTE: Students cannot use retirement dollars for a down payment.

- **Remind students to tap the green APPLY FOR LOAN button on the research screen, tap to fill and then tap SUBMIT!**

Bank: Savings Unlock Code: XXX

- Students have already made their savings decision today BUT the amount they have saved can be changed.
- If they decide to change their total savings amount, they will be required to re-allocate the total amount between the three categories – retirement, emergency fund, and other savings.

Cable-Internet-Phone

Unlock Code: XXX

Cable

- Students will have the chance to purchase cable TV service individually or “bundle” these services. They can choose “add-on” services that include movies and HD.
- Students can opt out of a cable purchase if they choose to.

Internet

- Students will have the chance to purchase internet service individually or “bundle” with other services. There are many choices for internet service. The higher the internet speed, the higher the bill will be.
- Students can opt out of an internet purchase if they choose to.

Phone

- Students will have the chance to purchase a cell phone and “bundles” of phone service, texting and data. They should remember to include their spouse in their decision-making.
- Students also have the option to purchase a land-line for their phone service in their home or apartment.

Child Care Unlock Code: XXX

- All students research child care, even if their persona has no children.
- **Discuss** advantages and disadvantages of a professional childcare setting versus a home daycare and how those differences might influence the cost.

NOTE: All personas with children will need childcare. When persona is single, full time child care is needed. For married households, full-time care is needed when spouse works full-time (Full-time care means 5 days a week). Part-time care means 2 or 3 days a week and is needed when spouse works part-time.

Clothing Unlock Code: XXX

- Students are expected to purchase at least one item for each family member.
- Point out to students that purchases may not be made every month, but should be budgeted for since some clothing will need to be replaced each year.
- Children outgrow clothing quickly so family budgets should reflect this need.

Credit Cards Unlock Code: XXX

- Each student has an existing credit card balance. They will discover what their minimum monthly payment is. Students can choose to pay more – and should be encouraged to do so, if possible.
- **Discuss** the consequences of making only minimum required payments each month.

Dining Out (Chick-fil-A) Unlock Code: XXX

- Students will decide if they will eat lunch out during the work week or brown bag it. They do not have to purchase lunch. They may also choose to take the family out to eat during the month or perhaps a date night.
- They can choose to eat out as much or as little they like. If single, they pay for two adults on date night.
- Dining out is an optional expense.

Education Unlock Code: XXX

- All students who have education beyond high school will be making a student loan payment. Students have the opportunity to increase their education as well and can make additional payments to earn another degree or take a personal interest class.
- Before unlocking the Education research, encourage students to look at the “advancement opportunities” section of their persona. (Click the Life Scenario button at the top of the tablet screen.)
- Do they need to consider taking a continuing education class? Is another degree required for promotion? If yes, they should budget for the additional class they need to take.

Entertainment Unlock Code: XXX

- Students may choose any number of activities for the month. At least one choice should include all family members.
- If they choose an activity that is “adults only” but have children, then they need to include babysitting expense in their budget plan. Expenses for pet ownership is also considered entertainment. This includes pet food, vet bills, etc.

Furniture Unlock Code: XXX

- Purchases are made to a store credit card and the first month’s payment will be due during shopping.
- Furniture doesn't typically have a monthly cost because you don't replace it every month. You can buy furniture a piece at a time or as a complete set for a specific room.
- This budget item is optional.

Grocery Unlock Code: XXX

- Students will choose the kinds of foods they want to plan on cooking and eating each month.
- Cost per person is based on government reported national averages.
- They must select the same type of food for all members of the family. (They cannot choose to eat gourmet but their spouse and children eat generic choices.)

Insurance-Health Unlock Code: XXX

- Students will select a health care option based on their family size – single, couple, or family. Single parents with one child must select the family option.
- **Ask** students what the risk is of not having health insurance. Talk with students about high level differences between a basic policy and major-medical.
- **Example:** Basic may limit the doctors or medical facilities you can choose from. Basic may limit the events or conditions they will pay for.

Insurance-Home and Renters

Unlock Code: XXX

- **Tell** student they will purchase this insurance – whether they end up buying a home or renting an apartment. Explain the difference between a cash-value and replacement value policy.
- **Example:** during an electric storm you have a power surge that fries your large screen TV and your computer. A cash value policy pays you what the TV and computer are worth today – say \$400 for the TV and \$0 for the computer because you've had them for a while. A replacement value policy actually pays you replace your TV and computer with an equivalent item – perhaps \$1000 for the TV and \$700 for the computer.

NOTE: We do not include deductibles in the Park but students may want to know that deductibles also affect insurance premiums.

Insurance-Disability and Life

Unlock Code: XXX

- They can purchase only disability or only life, or both insurance types.
- This expense is recommended but optional
- **Ask** students what if the unexpected happens? What if you can't provide the income your family has come to expect? That's where insurance comes in.

Home Improvement

Unlock Code: XXX

- Home improvement includes everything from putting a new roof on a home to painting a room.
- Purchases are made to a store credit card and the first month's payment will be due during shopping.
- This budget item is optional.

Housing

Unlock Code: XXX

- Students have the choice of renting or buying (assuming their mortgage is approved). Mortgage loan is applied for at the bank, not at housing.
- The prices of homes in the Park are national averages. Point out that homes in New York would be higher priced than what students will see. Cost of living in various parts of the country can vary greatly.
NOTE: If students are approved for a mortgage they are not required to buy a house, they may rent if they prefer.
- Some students with a high credit score will not be approved for a home loan because their existing savings is too low. Students should recognize that credit history and current financial situation – steady income, savings, and other debt – affects their ability to be approved for a home mortgage.

Investment

Unlock Code: XXX

- Students will decide how they will invest their savings. There are two kinds of investment decisions for students: Retirement and Emergency & Other Savings.
- The allocations under each fund should add up to 100%. By using the slider bar to adjust one account option, the other option will adjust automatically so they add up to 100%. Students can put everything into one type of account, or divide their investments among different account types – it's their choice.
- For Retirement, students will decide how much they will allocate to mutual funds and/or the stock market. If students want to invest in the stock market, they will select up to 3 specific stocks they want to own.
- For Emergency & Other Savings, they can choose between savings bonds and a high yield savings account.

Natural Gas Unlock Code: XXX

- Monthly gas bills are tied to each home or apartment based on the size of the living space. Natural gas is used to heat many homes and power some appliances. How should you plan to budget to cover these expenses?

Philanthropy Unlock Code: XXX

- Point out to students the importance of philanthropy in our communities. Some students may not understand that philanthropy is charitable giving. Give some local examples of philanthropists and philanthropic organizations.
- **Encourage** students to give; if not financially then through their time and talent.

That's Life Unlock Code: XXX

- This line item represents those expenses that may not fall easily into another budget category. It is the “surprise” that people didn’t think about. All students will have a scenario that will involve an expense.
- This is different from the emergency fund. Savings in the emergency should be reserved for real, major emergencies, like loss of job, major health expense, etc.

Transportation Unlock Code: XXX

- Everyone must make a choice for transportation. If student persona is married they will need to budget for and shop for two cars (or two public transportation options). If they buy an auto they will have choices between sedans, trucks, sports cars, mini-vans, etc. and need to consider their family size when selecting autos.
- Even if they plan to take public transportation instead of buying a car – everyone **MUST** apply for a loan. (NOTE: This is a dealer-financed loan.)
- **Remind students to tap the green APPLY FOR LOAN button on the research screen, tap to fill and then tap SUBMIT!**

Transportation-Gas and Maintenance Unlock Code: XXX

- Everyone who buys a car will have gas and maintenance expenses each month. The cost will be based on the car or cars they purchase. Help students to recognize that older cars are generally more expensive to maintain.
- Maintenance costs include oil changes, new tires, tune-ups and expected repairs. Gasoline cost is based on driving 1,000 miles per month and the MPG of the car(s) students select during shopping.

Electric & Utilities – Water/Sewer/Trash Unlock Code: XXX

- Water bills will be based on the number of people in the household. A household of 4 people uses more water than a single person.
- Trash removal is a flat rate per household – everyone pays the same amount. Students have the option of recycling if they pay for the service.
- Monthly electric bills are tied to each home or apartment and are based on the size of the living space.
- In JA Finance Park we are assuming your heat is electric. If you have gas heat you would receive both a gas and an electric bill each month.

Shopping Phase Hints and Reminders

- Students must consider their assigned family situation when making shopping decisions.
- Shopping decisions may fall above or below their budget plan, depending on what information they discover during shopping.
- Students **may reduce savings if necessary but total savings cannot fall below 2%** of NMI. (Do not share this with students unless or until they don't have other options that require them to spend more than their NMI.)
- Students **may NOT spend more than their household NMI** this month. They may have cash left over.
- **Housing** – Consider their family size when looking for housing.
 - They may buy a home if they are approved for a mortgage. If not, they must rent. If approved, they may buy a home or rent.
 - Other expenses associated with housing that must be included in shopping: home/renters insurance, utilities (gas, electric, water/sewer/trash).
- **Transportation** – If married, they must budget for two vehicles or plan to use public transportation.
 - If they have children, and purchase a vehicle, at least one of them must be large enough to accommodate their entire family.
 - Other expenses associated with BUYING a car include gas/maintenance and auto insurance.
 - If using public transportation, there are no additional, related transportation expenses.
- **Child Care** – If there are two children in the family they must budget for **child care expenses for both children**.
- **Entertainment** – Students must plan to include all family members in their entertainment choices during the month.
- **Education** – If they have an education loan, a minimum monthly payment is required (amount is noted on the option sheet). If their career requires continuing education or certification, they should budget for that. If career advancement requires additional education, they could consider including that in their budget.
- **Credit Card** – Students can choose the amount they pay toward balance, but must pay at least the minimum required.

Payments Phase Hints and Reminders

- **When students complete the shopping phase, review the budget tab to ensure that they have made all their shopping decisions.** This is an important step prior to the payment phase.
- Students may move into payment once their shopping completion is verified; they do not need to wait for everyone in the group to complete shopping.
- Give each student the debit card associated with his or her account number.
 - Remind students that they can find their PIN number on the Life Scenario page.
- Students will move from business to business, processing the payment they have recorded during the shopping phase.
 - Students visit **each** business to record payments.
 - Upon entering a business they will tap on the associated icon on the tablet. They will enter the 3 digit code displayed on the kiosk computer in the business.
 - Some businesses require debit card payments, other require submitting online payments.
 - If **online payment** – Student verifies payment amount on kiosk computer.
 - If **debit payment** – Student clicks icon on kiosk computer AND taps icon on tablet. When prompted, swipe debit card in reader and enter PIN on the kiosk computer.
- Once students have completed all payments, they will answer the 6 lifestyle goal questions again.
- Students view the Budget Review and Spending Analysis reports on their tablets, and verify that all payments have been made.
- Students then proceed to “check out.” The Check Out area is designated in the Park. A JA Staff member or a volunteer will review the Budget Review reports with them.
 - Students’ **Budget Review** reports will be emailed to their classroom teacher for review and follow up at school.

Closing Procedures

IF STUDENT FINISHES EARLY

A JA Staff member will advise when there is ten minutes remaining in this section. If student(s) in your group finish early ask the following questions for further discussion:

Was the cost of daycare surprising to you? What additional options or solutions might families consider for child care?

Possible answers may include: Parents could change shift so that one of them is home with children while the other one works. Live near grandparents or other family members who might be able to help with child care sometimes. Consider having one parents quit working to stay home full-time, especially if one parent is only working part-time.

Did you budget for additional education over and above your existing loan?

Did you pay the minimum monthly payment on your credit card or make a larger payment?

Did you increase your debt load by making a purchase in furniture or home improvement? Why or why not?

Did your credit score make it difficult to buy a home or car? What causes a credit score to be low?

Possible answers may include: Too many credit cards, too much debt, being late on payments, not having enough income compared to debt.

Compliment students on their work....and close with “Remember you owe it to yourself to “PAY YOURSELF FIRST!”

Thank you for volunteering today!