

Building Real World Connections

JA Finance Park, presented by Transamerica, is an innovation in **experiential education** designed to prepare **high school students** for life and work in the real world. By the end of the simulation, students recognize that the decisions they make about education and career impact on their potential income and quality of life. There are now two JA Finance Park locations in Metro Denver - **Thornton and Denver Tech Center** - in addition to a fully virtual option. **This program is offered to schools at no cost.**

A Glimpse Into Adulthood

At the start of the day, students select their career and define their future lifestyle and financial goals.

They will receive a job, salary, credit score, and family situation. They will then calculate their Net Monthly Income (NMI) and plan their budget accordingly.

Students will explore JA Finance Park learning about each expense category to determine if it is a need or a want.



Job Title: Project Manager

Annual Salary: \$63,000

Age: 38

Marital Status: Married with two children: girl age 8/boy age 5

Monthly Taxes: \$1,234

Social Security: \$326

Medicare: \$79

Other: Drive 22 miles round-trip to work each day

Employment background: After graduating from high school, you joined the Navy and earned your bachelor's degree in engineering. You are fortunate that you do not have any outstanding student loans. While you were in the Navy, you worked on large-scale projects. You will need a master's degree to move up in your company or secure a new job with better pay.

They will shop, pay their bills, apply for an auto loan and mortgage, and much more!

The simulation has multiple life-stages, allowing students to see the long-term impact of their education, savings, and credit decisions. It is up to them to budget enough to take care of themselves and their families.

Volunteer Component

Volunteers guide students through the simulation, assist at each expense category, and lead discussions with students.

Volunteers serve as role models and share their own real-life experiences to help bridge the gap between the simulation and what students may face in reality.



JA Finance Park Curriculum Advanced Level (Grades 9-12)

JA Finance Park Advanced gives students a more personal focus in personal finance and career exploration areas. It offers 7 required Foundation lessons (includes simulation) and 21 optional Extension lessons. Many Extension lessons are self-guided through online resources, allowing students a more personalized experience. All curriculum is provided at no cost and meets Personal Financial Literacy (PFL) standards.

Curriculum Overview - 7 Major Themes

Employment and Income: 2 Foundation lessons and 4 Extension lessons

Students learn the difference between gross and net pay and understand taxes.

Students explore career clusters and determine career pathways.

Extension: Students explore entrepreneurship, learn risk and tolerances to economic shocks, discuss work values, and explore IRS forms.

Employment and Education: 1 Foundation lesson and 5 Extension lessons

Students learn the time commitment, costs, and benefits of post-secondary education.

Extension: Students discuss the importance of choosing careers, consider the consequences of grades, explore the financial impact of post-secondary education, learn how to complete FAFSA, and interpret financial aid forms and awards.

Financially Responsibility and Decision Making: 1 Foundation lesson and 5 Extension lessons

Students recognize the responsibilities associated with financial decisions.

Extension: Students communicate the benefits of financial goals, learn smart decisions when buying a car, determine the impact taxes have on financial decisions, consider benefits of charitable giving, explore using credit responsibly, and explore the correlations of cost of living and location.

Planning and Money Management: 1 Foundation lesson and 3 Extension lessons

Students explore the differences between needs and wants and the importance of budgeting.

Extension: Students budget for extracurricular activities, explore cashless spending, and understand the impact of unexpected expenses.

Risk Management and Insurance: 1 Foundation lesson and 2 Extension lessons

Students analyze life, health, and disability insurance.

Extension: Students learn about auto insurance and mortgages.

Investing: 1 Foundation lesson and 2 Extension lessons

Students learn about different investment options.

Extension: Students learn the basics of the stock market and investing for retirement.

JA Finance Park Simulation and Debrief: 2 Foundation lessons.

Students apply what they learned in the classroom in a mobile or virtual simulation. Students reflect on their entire experience.

Register for JA Finance Park at www.jacolorado.org/finance-park

For more information contact financepark@jacolorado.org