

# Financial Champions

## Supporting School-Age Accreditation and Quality Programming

*Financial Champions* is designed for youth in grades 7-9.

## Opportunities for Youth Leadership and Development and Cross-age Teaching

There are many ideas for youth leadership opportunities in the *Financial Champions Helper's Guide* such as developing a money game and teaching it to others or organizing a savings club or investment club. The skills taught can help youth work with a club or organization to determine goals for the group and set up a budget and spending plan to meet those goals. It also teaches positive communication skills such as strategies for managing conflict and attentive listening.



## Ideas! Ideas! Ideas!

Brainstorming with youth and parents is a great way to generate a list of ideas for field trips, speakers, and websites. Here are a few ideas:

- Invite local banker, insurance salesperson, investment officer, teacher at a business or accounting school
- Visit an ATM – behind the scenes
- Visit the county treasurer's office or auditor's office

<http://moneytalks4teens.ucdavis.edu/>  
<http://www.younginvestor.com/>  
<http://www.extension.org>  
<http://www.4-hdirectory.org>

## Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development

Through 4-H, youth know they are cared about and feel a sense of BELONGING; they exercise INDEPENDENCE by using decision-making and action to influence people and events; they develop a sense of MASTERY by learning skills needed in making positive career and life choices; and they experience GENEROSITY by helping others through community service. These elements support the Army Youth Development Components of Belonging, Success, Service and Independence.

## Providing Quality Middle School and Teen Programming

Money becomes a very important part of Middle School and Teen members lives. Advertisers, peers, and family influence what they do with their money. Do they spend money on things they want (such as clothing or electronics), or save it for a major purchase (a car or college). How do they get their money? *Financial Champions* can be used as a stand-alone project lesson guide, or in conjunction with other materials to support workforce preparation skills.



## Summary

It's not necessary to be an expert money manager to teach financial information. All that's needed is an interest in the subject! Read through the materials and try out the activities. It's possible to increase personal skills in money management while learning how to get youth involved in the activities. By talking about what they have learned, 4-H members will extend their financial management skills and develop their ability to think critically about their experiences.

# THE Army 4-H EXPRESS GUIDE TO

## Financial Champions

Many young people on the verge of adulthood don't know a lot about the financial challenges they will soon face. More than half of college-bound students lack basic skills in the management of personal finance. 4-H *Financial Champions* is a practical guide to teach youth to be good caretakers of their money and how to apply those skills to other areas of their lives.



## Project Goals

The *Financial Champion* Series encourages interaction with the community and learning how to learn by developing research skills. The project books have group activities that define a life skill and a personal finance skill and include ways for youth to examine their own thoughts about money and discover money motivators in themselves or others. Group activities teach goal-setting, the difference between needs and wants, communication skills, and how to budget; learn about financial institutions, the pros and cons of credit, and how to select financial services. The **Helper's Guide** provides additional activities and interesting experiences that support the lessons covered in **Money Fun-damentals** and **Money Moves**.

## Four Fun Activities

**1** A shirt, athletic shoes, a hamburger, a milkshake – are these needs or wants? **Money Fun-damentals, I Really Need That, pages 6-9**, looks at the difference between needs and wants. This group activity looks at things a family must have to survive vs. things a family has to make their lives more comfortable.

**2** A new pair of jeans...or new music – how to decide? Unless the money supply is unlimited, there needs to be a plan to decide how to achieve financial goals. **Money Fun-damentals, Get Smart, pages 19-21**, looks at how making a plan and setting goals can help in achieving goals.

**3** One of the toughest lessons to learn is the use of credit. Advertisers bombard consumers with promotions so that consumers think they need what is for sale. **Money Moves, Charging Up, pages 11-14**, studies the cost of buying something with credit vs. paying cash.

**4** It seems so easy to buy something, just write a check or use a debit card. But is it? How do checking accounts and debit cards work? **Money Moves, Check It Out, pages 15-21**, explains the process of writing checks and keeping records when using a debit card.

## Experiential Learning



Experiential learning engages youth while they learn, share, and grow through their 4-H experiences. The focus is on them as learners with an adult as the coach. First comes the “doing” or exploring. Next, youth share what they did and discuss the experience with their peers. After they’ve identified the skills and knowledge gained, help then determine how to apply these to other situations in their lives. Suggested questions include:

- What was most difficult to learn about money?
- What was the most fun to learn?
- Is there anything you need to know to manage your money better?
- What do you like best about learning about money?
- Can you use money to tell stories about your life?
- What stories will it tell?
- What websites can you use to help you learn about money?

## Project Activity Guides and Target Age Groups

**Money Fun-damentals, Book 1** helps youth identify their money personalities and has activities to explore communication and problem solving, defining needs and wants, resolving disagreements about money, setting goals, and creating budgets.

**Money Moves, Book 2** guides youth through taking care of money and selecting financial services. Other activities involve compounding simple interest and looking at the positive and negative aspects of credit. Youth also will learn how to maintain a checking account, the effects of advertising, and other aspects of consumerism.

**The Helper's Guide** contains activities that enhance the youth guides, as well as ideas for group activities, presentations, demonstrations, field trips, community service projects, exhibits, leadership opportunities, and meeting icebreakers.

## Integrating Technology

Technology and the financial world are closely related. There are e-banking, checking or debit cards, bank statements on-line, and websites that help calculate interest. There are programs to assist with personal financial management or setting up a financial management spreadsheet.

- <http://pa4h.cas.psu.edu/FinancialChampions/personality.htm>
- Check with the Youth Technology Specialist for additional resources

## Related 4-H Projects

- *Entrepreneurship, Be the “e”*
- *Consumer Savvy*
- *Reading Makes Sense*
- *Workforce Readiness*



## Life Skills

“Skills that help an individual to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life” are identified as Life Skills (Hendricks, 1996). Life Skills in this project include decision-making, communicating, leading self and others, planning, and organizing. Although each activity specifically targets only one life skill, youth have the opportunity to practice several.

## Community Service Service Learning Opportunities

There are many ways youth can give back to their community. Some examples include:

- Donate to or volunteer at a thrift shop or food pantry
- Raise money as a group and donate it to a local non-profit organization
- Interview people from different generations about money topics and present the interviews to the local library or history center
- Organize an exchange for sports equipment

## Linking to the Army's Four Service Areas and Baseline Programming



**Sports, Fitness and Health Options**  
Youth purchase many goods and services in the Sports, Fitness and Health Options arena. **Money Moves, Shop ‘Til You Drop, pages 31-33**, helps teens compare the price and features of sports, fitness, or health services and goods to determine a best buy.

### Arts, Recreation and Leisure Activities

There are many activities in *Financial Champions* that are related to this service area. Most teens consider shopping a leisure activity. **Money Moves, It All Adds Up, pages 25-30**, helps teens understand how advertising draws their attention to a product to get them to buy. Once they understand how advertising works, the trip to the shopping mall will be more of a leisure activity and less of a chance to buy something not need.

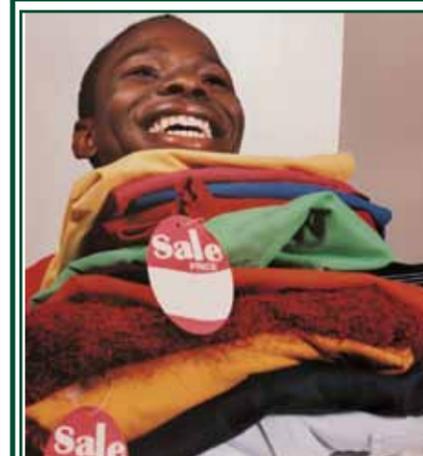
### Life Skills, Citizenship, and Leadership Opportunities

Communication, leading, learning, critical thinking, planning, and keeping records are all valuable life skills that are taught using *Financial Champions*. **Money Fun-damentals, Money Motivators, pages 10-14**, explores different ways to communicate in order to reduce disagreements over money.

### Academic Support, Mentoring, and Intervention Services

The *Financial Champions* series encourages learning how to learn by developing research skills. **Money Moves, Taking Care of Your Money, pages 2-5**, is one example where teens compare different ways to keep their money such as at a bank or investments.

## Character Connection



Encourage youth to model the Pillars of Character by:

- making sound financial decisions
- making good choices

Additional character resources can be found at [www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org](http://www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org)