

EDUCATOR TOOLKIT

Aligning with Tennessee Personal Finance Standards

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Introduction

The AFSA Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the delivery of high quality, effective personal finance education. Our flagship program, MoneySKILL®, is an interactive, web-based personal finance curriculum designed to build practical money management skills through 37 engaging modules. This toolkit was created as a guide for Tennessee educators to use to connect MoneySKILL content to the Tennessee Department of Education’s personal finance standards. By mapping each state standard to corresponding MoneySKILL modules and providing links to additional classroom resources, this toolkit simplifies lesson planning, ensures educators are meeting personal finance curriculum requirements, and

supports effective delivery of financial education across Tennessee schools.

We invite you to explore this toolkit and use it as a resource to strengthen your personal finance instruction for students in middle school, high school, and beyond. Educators can sign up for a free MoneySKILL instructor account using the link below to gain full access to the platform’s ad-free content, class management tools, and teaching materials. Together, we can ensure that every Tennessee student gains the foundational knowledge and skills needed for lifelong financial success.

[Sign Up](#)

Using MoneySKILL in the Classroom

MoneySKILL is a free (and ad-free), customizable, interactive, web-based curriculum that teaches foundational money management skills that can last a lifetime. Topics covered in its 37 course modules include budgeting, credit, saving and investing, vehicle purchasing, income taxes, and insurance. MoneySKILL can be used as a standalone personal finance course or integrated into a variety of courses where personal finance is included (e.g., business, economics, family and consumer sciences, math, social studies, and more).

Any educator who is interested in teaching personal finance can sign up to become a MoneySKILL instructor. In addition to traditional schoolteachers,

this includes parents, home school educators, school administrators, nonprofit organizations, and community educators. As shown in the tables below, MoneySKILL is well-aligned with Tennessee Department of Education personal finance standards. Specifically, 30 of its 37 modules align with at least one Tennessee course content strand. In addition to the course modules themselves, the AFSA Education Foundation has additional resources that complement and support the MoneySKILL modules. Information about supplemental materials can be found on the AFSA Education Foundation [website](#) and linked within this toolkit (page 8).

Tennessee personal finance standards are action oriented with words like “write,” “explore,” “create,” “describe,” “calculate,” and “compare.” Each MoneySKILL module features 10 content chunks and related assessment questions that include case study analyses and math calculations, thereby providing educators with ready-made activities that align with state standards. MoneySKILL course structure can be self-paced by students or teacher-led.

Recommended MoneySKILL teaching strategies include:

- Teach course content first and then have students use MoneySKILL for review and application of concepts.
- Have students complete modules alone (e.g., for homework) or in small groups and debrief the answers.
- Work through MoneySKILL content as a total class; teach selected concepts and ask their related questions.
- Combine MoneySKILL content and questions with supplemental learning activities (a hybrid approach).
- Develop discussion prompts and/or include current events to reinforce key concepts.
- Provide additional resources and/or individual remedial instruction as needed.
- Use guest speakers (e.g., financial services professionals) to provide real-world insights.
- Have students apply knowledge gained through projects (e.g., a personal budget and credit card comparison).
- Assign a final project (e.g., personal financial plan) or use a final assessment to determine student progress.
- Encourage students to share what they learned (e.g., bulletin boards, school newspaper, social media).
- Give students who pass the course a certificate of completion (MoneySKILL provides certificates).
- Gather feedback from students to refine future teaching methods.

Students are never too young to learn about personal finance. In addition to supporting the Tennessee personal finance course requirement for high school graduation, MoneySKILL can also be adapted for use with middle school students. There are 12 MoneySKILL modules that are easily adaptable for middle school classrooms and 11 of them align with the Tennessee personal finance standards.

Tennessee Personal Finance Education Standards

The state of Tennessee has required a half-semester stand-alone personal finance course for high school graduation since 2013. Tennessee was an early adopter of guaranteed financial education and among the first five states to add a course mandate according to the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE). Tennessee students in grades 9-12 are required to take 0.5 credits of financial literacy coursework. Guiding the content that is taught to students are state standards that incorporate key personal finance topics.

As noted in the introduction to the May 2025 Tennessee Department of Education standards for personal finance education, “Personal finance is a foundational course designed to inform students how individual choices directly influence occupational goals, future earning potential, and long-term financial well-being.”

The Tennessee personal finance course standards include content related to six areas of personal finance:

- Financial responsibility and personal decision-making
- Education, careers, and income
- Planning, housing, and money management
- Credit and debt
- Risk management
- Saving and investing

Within each standard are detailed strands that describe specific proficiencies that students should demonstrate upon course completion.

The AFSA Education Foundation’s MoneySKILL course is ideally suited to teach personal finance course content to Tennessee students and is a valuable resource for financial educators. The 37 MoneySKILL modules can be used alone or in combination with supplemental resources such as videos, infographics, online calculators, games, digital brochures, and student worksheets.

In the section below, each of the Tennessee personal finance standards and their respective strands are listed, along with the MoneySKILL module(s) that teaches the foundational knowledge required to meet the goals described in each strand. This format is designed to make it simple for educators to find content to support their classes and to prepare reports for school administrators.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND PERSONAL DECISION MAKING

Course Standard Strands	MoneySKILL Modules
<p>1.1 Personal Finance: Define the concept of personal finance. Consider how personal finance concepts fit into key life events or stages and explain the importance of personal financial planning using information sources such as instructional materials, news articles, blogs from reputable sources, personal narratives, and industry publications.</p>	<p>Module 2 - Lifetime Plan</p>
<p>1.2 Goals: Write short-term (a year or less), mid-term (1 – 5 years), and long-term (over 5 years), personal financial goals defining desired education, career, and earning milestones, and saving and spending plans. Evaluate factors that may influence the goals, including family responsibilities, individual values, financial factors, and economic conditions.</p>	<p>Module 1- The Plans We Have For Our Lives</p> <p>Module 22 - Savings</p> <p>Module 23 - Short-Term Saving Vehicles</p>
<p>1.3 Decision Making: Students will demonstrate the ability to apply decision-making models and principles to evaluate financial choices, considering factors such as risk, opportunity cost, and personal values, to make informed and responsible financial decisions aligned with their goals.</p>	<p>Module 2 - Lifetime Plan</p>
<p>1.4 Emerging Technologies: Explore emerging technologies such as cryptocurrency and the ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI) in personal finance, examining their potential benefits and risks, and critically evaluating their role in financial decision-making processes to make informed choices aligned with ethical principles and long-term financial well-being.</p>	<p><i>Not yet aligned – coming in 2026 course updates!</i></p>

EDUCATION, CAREERS, AND INCOME

Course Standard Strands	MoneySKILL Modules
<p>2.1 Aptitudes, Strengths, and Interests: Complete one or more career aptitude surveys, analyze the results, and relate how the identified career aptitudes align with the student’s strengths and interests. Evaluate education and training path options to prepare for identified jobs or careers of interest.</p>	<p>Module 3 - Earned Income and Skill Demand</p> <p>Module 4 - Earned Income and Skill Supply</p>
<p>2.2 Career Research: Using the career focus identified, create an annotated chart, table, or graphic to evaluate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. education and training including admission requirements and tuition requirements; b. available positions; c. salaries; d. cost vs. benefits of educational/training; e. potential lifetime earnings; f. employer benefits; and g. possible need for relocation to advance. 	<p>Module 3 - Earned Income and Skill Demand</p> <p>Module 4 - Earned Income and Skill Supply</p> <p>Module 8 - Income Over the Life Cycle</p>
<p>2.3 Postsecondary Financing: Explore and evaluate options for financing postsecondary education. Demonstrate an understanding of Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) requirements to apply for postsecondary education financial aid by completing an application. Identify strategies for reducing the overall cost of postsecondary education, including the impact of scholarships, grants, work-study, and other assistance and the application process.</p>	<p>Module 32 - Student Loans</p>
<p>2.4 Financing Post-Secondary Education: Explain the impact borrowing money to finance different post-secondary options could have on future financial stability and security. Research multiple viewpoints that support or question the use of student loan debt in paying for postsecondary education. Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence presented support the author’s claim. Citing specific textual evidence, craft an argumentative essay that either supports or opposes the use of student loan debt, developing both claim(s) and counterclaim(s) fairly.</p>	<p>Module 32 - Student Loans</p>
<p>2.5 Take Home Pay: Describe factors affecting take-home pay such as tax withholdings, benefits (e.g., insurance, 401k), and plan payroll deductions. Complete a 1040 and a W-4 Employee’s Withholding Allowance paperwork and analyze the W-2 Wage and Tax Statement for federal income tax purposes.</p>	<p>Module 9 - Federal Income Taxes</p> <p>Module 10 - Other Deductions from Pay</p>

PLANNING, HOUSING, AND MONEY MANAGEMENT

Course Standard Strands	MoneySKILL Modules
<p>3.1 Net Worth: Using money management tools such as online computer-based budgeting tools or hard copy forms, create a personal balance sheet, determine assets and liabilities, and calculate net worth for an identified career.</p>	<p><i>Not yet aligned – coming in 2026 course updates!</i></p>
<p>3.2 Monthly Budget: Using research from local sources (e.g., as cost of living calculators, newspapers, chambers of commerce, local government, and company websites), create a monthly personal budget that reflects household living expenses, taxes, potential savings, and an emergency fund. Develop a saving/spending plan for a week and track actual spending for comparison.</p>	<p>Module 11 - Tracking Expenses and Budgeting</p> <p>Module 16 - Food and Clothing</p>
<p>3.3 Renting a Home: Analyze the advantages and disadvantages of renting a home, including factors such as lease terms, rental costs, and flexibility to make informed decisions about whether renting aligns with their current financial situation and lifestyle preferences.</p>	<p>Module 14 - Renting a Home</p>
<p>3.4 Purchasing a Home: Evaluate the process of buying a home, including steps such as saving for a down payment, understanding mortgage options, and assessing housing affordability to make informed decisions about homeownership and its long-term financial implications.</p>	<p>Module 15 - Owning a Home</p>
<p>3.5 Consumer Protection: Understand the availability of consumer protection laws, agencies, and resources. Investigate the availability and reliability of resources to assist consumers in making buying decisions. Include national, state, and local resources, as appropriate.</p>	<p><i>Not yet aligned – coming in 2026 course updates!</i></p>
<p>3.6 Financial Institutions: Research a variety of financial institutions, including banks and credit unions including digital financial services. Compare and contrast services and products between the institutions such as checking accounts, savings accounts, certificates of deposits, etc. Identify one service that best supports the student's personal financial goals and craft an argumentative essay supporting the choice. Using a banking transaction scenario, demonstrate an ability to do the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> reconcile an account both via a traditional register and tracking online transactions; write a check; and verify account accuracy via statements and online access. 	<p>Module 12 - Paying for What We Buy</p> <p>Module 13 - Using a Checking Account</p> <p>Module 22 - Savings</p> <p>Module 23 - Short-Term Saving Vehicles</p>

CREDIT AND DEBT

Course Standard Strands	MoneySKILL Modules
<p>4.1 Consumer Credit: Evaluate the various sources and types of consumer credit, such as student loans, auto loans, store credit cards, flex loans, consumer installment loans, title loans, and payday loans. Draw conclusions about the types of credit best suited for financing and/or purchasing various goods and services defending claims with specific textual evidence. Explain how taking on debt early in life may affect financial stability and security later in life.</p>	<p>Module 28 - Costs and Benefits of Borrowing</p> <p>Module 29 - Secured Borrowing</p> <p>Module 30 - Credit Cards and Other Unsecured Borrowing</p>
<p>4.2 Credit Reporting: Examine information from sources such as major credit reporting agencies, federal agencies, or other credible organizations to describe credit reports and credit scores. Describe the relationship between consumers and credit reports/credit scores discussing their importance and citing specific textual evidence from research. Analyze a sample credit report and interpret how the contents may affect the credit score. Explain how the credit score may impact borrowing opportunities and the cost of credit. Summarize specific activities used to maintain a good credit score.</p>	<p>Module 31 - Your Credit Rating</p>
<p>4.3 Cost of Borrowing: Citing evidence found in credit applications, compare and contrast various types of credit, and calculate the real cost of borrowing. Explain factors that can affect the approval process associated with each type. Identify typical information and procedures required in the credit application process. Analyze factors associated with the purchase of an automobile and defend a specific buying decision, including the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Define and understand factors most often included in negotiations (e.g., as cash vs. financing, inclusion of trade-in, etc.). Evaluate costs and benefits of different service contracts and/or warranty options. Compare and contrast available financing options based on consumer characteristics and the size of the down payment. Discuss the differences in owning vs. leasing a car (e.g., down payment, terms, and contracts). 	<p>Module 17 - Preparing to Acquire a Vehicle</p> <p>Module 18 - Vehicle Financing</p> <p>Module 19 - Operating a Vehicle</p> <p>Module 28 - Costs and Benefits of Borrowing</p> <p>Module 29 - Secured Borrowing</p>

RISK MANAGEMENT

Course Standard Strands	MoneySKILL Modules
<p>5.1 Insurance: Differentiate the benefits and costs associated with various types of insurance, such as health, life, property, and auto. Describe the risks associated with a lack of appropriate coverage in specific situations. Determine the role of insurance in personal financial planning to preserve and build wealth with financial stability and security.</p>	<p>Module 34 - Understanding Insurance</p> <p>Module 35 - Life Insurance, Wills, and Disability Insurance</p> <p>Module 36 - Health Insurance</p>
<p>5.2 Identity Theft: Conduct assessments of various types of identity theft situations and scams; then determine strategies and present a plan to safeguard and protect against identity theft. Design and present a plan to significantly lower and protect against risks. Determine steps that should be taken by a victim of identity theft to report the incident and re-establish identity.</p>	<p>Module 33 - Identity Theft</p>

SAVING AND INVESTING

Course Standard Strands	MoneySKILL Modules
<p>6.1 Saving and Investing: Explain how saving and investing contribute to financial well-being, building wealth, and helping meet personal financial goals. Compare and contrast saving and investment strategies, such as savings accounts, certificates of deposit, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, employer-sponsored savings plans, physical assets, and commodities. Design a diversified saving and investment plan that includes strategies compatible with personal goals. Include the time value of money and compound interest calculations in the analysis.</p>	<p>Module 22 - Savings</p> <p>Module 23 - Short-Term Saving Vehicles</p> <p>Module 24 - Long-Term, Fixed Income Assets</p> <p>Module 25 - Equities</p> <p>Module 26 - Investment Funds</p>

Effective financial education requires high-quality teaching and learning materials. Listed below are national and Tennessee resources to support the execution of personal finance education standards in Tennessee:

AFSA Education Foundation & MoneySKILL Resources

- [MoneySKILL instructor sign-up](#)
- [Evaluating MoneySKILL: Effects on Financial Knowledge and Behaviors research paper \(2023\)](#)
- [MoneySKILL course flyer](#)
- [MoneySKILL video](#)
- [About MoneySKILL video](#)
- [MoneySKILL: Free Personal Finance Course for Your Classroom video](#)
- [MoneySKILL Supplemental Videos Per Module list](#)

Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy Resources

- [Jump\\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy](#)
- [Jump\\$tart Coalition National Standards for Personal Financial Education](#)
- [Jump\\$tart Clearinghouse \(curated financial education resources\)](#)
- [Jump\\$tart Financial Foundations for Educators \(online professional development course\)](#)
- [Jump\\$tart National Educator Conference](#)

Tennessee Resources

- [Tennessee Jump\\$tart](#)
- [Tennessee Financial Literacy Commission](#)
- [Tennessee Department of Education Personal Finance website](#)
- [Tennessee Department of Financial Institutions Financial Education website](#)
- [Tennessee Department of Treasury](#)
- [University of Tennessee Extension Money website](#)

The AFSA Education Foundation was founded as a nonprofit in 1990 with the mission to educate consumers of all ages on personal finance concepts and responsible money management. For more than 30 years, the foundation has been dedicated to providing free personal finance education, resources, and training to educators of all types from schools to the workplace.

In support of its mission, the foundation developed MoneySKILL® in 2002 as one of the first online personal finance curriculums. MoneySKILL is designed to allow instructors to create custom, web-based personal finance courses primarily for middle school, high school, and college students and consists of 37 different topic areas focusing on a broad range of money management fundamentals. In addition to being completely free with no commercial advertisements for all educators, MoneySKILL is offered in English and Spanish, contains audio dictation options, and aligns with nationally recognized personal finance standards.

To learn more about MoneySKILL and sign up today, visit www.moneyskill.org or contact the foundation at info@moneyskill.org.

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